

T H E
W O R K S
O F

Mr. Robert Russel.

In Three Parts.

P A R T I.
Seven S E R M O N S
On several T E X T S of Scripture.

P A R T II.
*The Devout CHRISTIAN'S Compa-
nion and Exercise in DEVOTION.*
Containing Prayers for every Day in the Week, and se-
veral Occasions, for Families and Private Persons.

P A R T III.
A Discourse on the Holy S A C R A M E N T,
with Persuasions and Encouragements thereunto, and
Directions how to receive it Worthily. *To which is
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Mr. Robert Kew



Emboffore

John and Andrew
the Books





SEVEN
SERMONS:

VIZ

- I. Of the Unpardonable Sin against the HOLY GHOST: or, The Sin unto Death.
- II. The Saint's Duty and Exercise: In Two Parts. Being an Exhortation to and Directions for Prayer.
- III. The Accepted Time, and Day of Salvation.
- IV. The End of Time, and Beginning of Eternity.
- V. *Joshua's Resolutions to serve the Lord.*
- VI. The Way to Heaven made Plain.
- VII. The Future State of Man: or, A Treatise of the Resurrection.

By ROBERT RUSSELL, of Ward-
hurst in *Sussex*.

The Twenty second Edition.

Enter'd according to Order.

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A T A B L E of the several **T E X T S**
discours'd upon.

T Here is a Sin unto Death, 1 John v.
part of Verse 16.

Pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17

— Behold, now is the Accepted Time; be-
hold now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor.
vi. part of Verse 2.

And the Angel which I saw stand upon the
Earth, and upon the Sea, lift up his Hand
towards Heaven: And swear by him that
liveth for ever and ever, &c. That there
should be Time no longer, Rev. x. Verse 5.
and part of Verse 6.

But as for me and my House, we will serve
the Lord, Josh. xxiv. part of verse 15.

Good Master, what shall I do to inherit Eter-
nal Life? Matth. xix. 16.

Marvel not at this, the Hour is coming, where-
in all that are in their Graves shall hear his
Voice, and shall come forth; they that have
done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life,
and they that have done Evil unto the Re-
surrection of Damnation, John xxviii. 29.

3 NO 63

Of the Unpardonable S I N
A G A I N S T T H E
H O L Y G H O S T :
O R,
The S I N unto D E A T H.

*r John V. part of Verse xvi. There is a Sin
unto Death.*

THis Sin which St John calls here,
The Sin unto Death, is the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, described by our blessed Saviour, *Matth. 12. 32.* that whosoever commits it, hath no Forgiveness, neither in this World, nor in the World to come : For, *All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Men ; but the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men. And he that speaketh a Word against the Son, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.* This Sin against the Holy Ghost, that is
A 3. that.

that Sin which St. *John* calls here, *the Sin unto Death*: Not because that Sin deserves Death alone, for so does all Sin deserve Death both Temporal and Eternal; for *the Wages of Sin* (even all) is *Death*, Rom. 6. But this Sin against the Holy Ghost, is called, *The Sin unto Death*; because it binds a Man over to Eternal Death without any possibility of Recovery. Now some there are, that go on from one degree of Sin to another, the heighten and aggravate their Sins more and more, until they are brought to that height at last, as to commit that Sin, for which there is no Forgiveness.

There is no meer Man since the Fall, that can live without Sin, for all are Sinners: But yet there are Degrees of Sin; some Sins in their own Nature are small, others are more great and heinous. Many Sins there are that are great, yet pardonable, and one Sin there is unpardonable; and whosoever commits that one Sin, shall have no Forgiveness, but must for ever bear the Weight and Punishment, both of that, and of all his other Sins. There is such a Sin as St. *John* speaks of here in my Text, that is, *a Sin unto Death*. And now I come to the Explication of the Words, from whence I shall raise this Point of Doctrine:

Doct.] That amongst other Sins committed by fallen Mankind, there is only one Sin, that is a Sin unto Death; and whosoever committeth that, he hath no Forgiveness, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.

Now, for my further Proceeding on this Subject, I shall lay open to you,

First, What the Sin unto Death is.

Secondly, That all other Sins, how great and heinous soever, may be forgiven.

Thirdly, That this Sin alone shall never be forgiven.

Fourthly, The Reason why that Sin alone is unpardonable. And then,

Lastly, I shall conclude all with a few Words of Application.

I shall begin first with the Description of this unpardonable Sin; where I shall endeavour to make as plain a Description of it, as possible I can; and in doing of it, I shall, I. Shew you Negatively, what is not this Sin. II. I shall shew you Positively what it is.

I I shall shew you Negatively, what is not this Sin unto Death; or in what Degree a Man may Sin, and yet not commit that unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

II. It is not every quenching of the Motions of the Spirit, that is that Sin; it is

true, when the Holy Ghost comes with a still Voice, and knocks at the Doors of Sinners Hearts for Entrance, he often comes and strives with them, and secretly wooes and beseeches them to leave their Sins, and be converted; yet they quench and stifle all his Motions, and bear up their Hearts against him, and will not be obedient to his Heavenly Calls; now such sin grievously against the Holy Ghost: But yet this alone is not the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost; for many who have stood it out a long time, and have often quenched and grieved the Holy Spirit, yet at last they have been wrought upon unto sincere Conversion.

2. A Man may commit many hainous and crying Sins, and yet not be guilty of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. A Man may be an Idolater, a Whoremonger, a Fornicator, a Murderer, and work Witchcraft, and sin with a very high Hand; nay, he may live in all manner of Filthiness and Lewdness, and yet not be under the Guilt of the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. Thus we read, 2 Chron. 33. that *Manasseh* sinned with a very high Hand; he was an Idolater, an Inchanter, and worked Witchcraft, and dealt with Familiar Spirits, and wrought

wrought much Evil in the sight of the Lord. And *Mary Magdalen* had seven Devils cast out of her, *Luke* 8. 2. and yet both were pardoned.

3. A Man may sin presumtuously against great Light and Knowledge, and yet not commit *this Sin unto Death*: For *Peter* when he denied Christ; he did it against great Knowledge of Christ; he knew Christ to be his Lord and Saviour, he was one of Christ's beloved Deciples; and for all that, how strongly he denied Christ, and that with an Oath too; and yet for all that, Christ looked upon him with a mericful Eye, and he repented, and was forgiven.

4. It is not every malicious sin that is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost; for *St. Paul* certainly had great Malice in his Heart, when he went on so furiously to persecute the Church of God; and yet he was converted, and became a Preacher of the Gospel of Christ, which before he persecuted.

5. And Lastly, It is not final Unbelief, nor final Impenitence, that is, the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, though some be of Opinion that it is; because that Sin is unpardonable, and Christ himself hath said, *Mat.* 12. 31. *That all manner of*

Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Man, except it be the Sin against the Holy Ghost. But you are to take the Words of our Saviour in their true sense and meaning; it is all manner of Sin and Blasphemy committed within the Compass of Man's Life that shall be forgiven, except the Sin against the Holy Ghost; for the Sin of final Impenitency, and final Unbelief, is not completed until the very Moment of a Man's Death; and then you all know, that there is no Repentance, and consequently no Pardon after Death; for Christ saith, *He that sins against the Holy Ghost, hath no forgiveness, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.* Now why should Christ say, *In this World*, if there be no space to be forgiven in this World? But a Man may commit the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, even many Years before his Death. Besides, there are many thousands that die in Impenitency and Unbelief, and are damned, and yet never committed the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Thus I have shewed you Negatively, what is not this unpardonable Sin, none of these Sins in particular is that Sin.

II. I come now to shew you Positively, what this *Sin unto Death* is, and where-
in this unpardonable Sin against the Holy
Ghost

Ghost doth consist. Now there are several Opinions in the World about it; some hold one thing, some another: But I have not Time nor Room to dispute concerning other Oppinions about it; but I will endeavour thorough God's help, to lead you to the plain Sight of it, by the Light of the Holy Scripture.

Now in the first place you must know, that there are two sorts of People that cannot commit this unpardonable Sin.

1. The true Believers cannot commit it, tho' many times for their Tryal, God suffers them to fall foully into many grievous Sins; yet they being rooted into Christ, they are upheld by free Grace and Mercy, that they cannot fall into this unpardonable Sin.

2. The grossly Ignorant cannot commit it, because it is a Sin against great Light and Knowledge. Indeed, the greatest part of the World shall be damned; yet amongst the greatest part, there be but few of them that can commit that unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Some have both Light and grace, these shall not commit the unpardonable Sin. Again, some have neither Light nor Grace, these cannot commit it. But there are some again that have Light and no Grace; these

these are they that are liable to commit the unpardonable Sin against the holy Ghost. Now there must be two Ingredients to make up this unpardonable Sin; that is, Light in the head, and Malice in the heart; without these two, the Sin against the holy Ghost cannot be committed: For to sin against great Light and Knowledge, is not that Sin alone; nor yet to sin ignorantly, out of that Malice, is not that Sin; but they must joyn both together to make up this unpardonable Sin. This we see plainly, by the Example of *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*; *Peter* he denied Christ, and forswore himself too, and that grievously, against Light and Knowledge; for he knew Christ to be the only begotten Son of God, and he knew God in him: he was one of Christ's Disciples, and one of his beloved Disciples too; he was taught of Christ, and had experimental Knowledge of his Love and Favour, and yet he wickedly, with an Oath, denied him. Now if *Peter* had done this out of Malice and Spite, then he had committed that Sin unto Death, for which there is no Forgiveness. But *Peter* had no Malice in his heart all this while, even at that time when he denied Christ, as you may see *Matth. 29.* when Christ told him, *Before*
the

the Cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. He answered, If I should die with thee I will not deny thee. And then denying him thro' Infirmitie and Weakness of the Flesh, when he had considered what he had done, he went out and wept bitterly, Ver. 75. And Paul he had great Malice and Spite against the Ways and People of God; as you may see, Acts 9. 1. Paul breathed out Threatnings, and Slaughter, against the Disciples of the Lord, and desired of them Letters to Damascus, to the Synagogues, that if he found any of this Way, whether Men or Women, that he should bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now here was great Rage and Malice in Saul, against the Ways of the People of God; but doing it ignorantly, he at last hearing a Voice, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And receiving of a Light from Heaven, that it was Jesus that he persecuted, he was pricked at the Heart, and trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Now by these two places of Scripture, you may plainly see, that Peter sinned against great Light, and Paul out of great Malice, yet none of them both committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. But whensoever Light and Malice meet together in one Man, then there is a Sin against the Holy

Holy Ghost. Now as all other Sins, so this Sin against the Holy Ghost may be committed in Thought, Word, or Action.

1. In Thought; that is, when a wicked Man, again his clear Light and Knowledge, doth but conceive a malicious Thought, and Purpose, towards persecuting the Gospel of Christ, or of the Saints of Christ, to hinder the Work of the Holy Ghost in them.

This Sin is to be thought, was the Sin of the lost Angels; for which Cause they were lost without all Hopes of Pardon. Now some dispute whether their Sin was a Sin of the Thought; but I say with all likelihood it was: For the Angels being only Spirits, without Bodies, and so have no use of bodily Tongues, it could not be committed in Word; nor yet could they commit it in Action, because they were cast out of Heaven, before they could bring it into Practice, therefore it must be a Sin of the Thought.

Now their Sin was this, their Habitation being in the highest Heavens, next under God himself, they had exceeding great Light and Knowledge; they had more Knowledge than all the Men in the World ever had, and were happy above all other Creatures; but, when not being

contented with this Estate, they thought to be as high as God himself; therefore maliciously sought to make War against the Son of God, and put him out of his Throne; for which Cause they were immediately thrust out of Heaven, never more to see the Face of Mercy; and thus from the Beginning they have been counted malicious and revengful, a raging Beast, and a roaring Lion: Thus their Sin being of the same Nature with the Sin against the Holy Ghost, they were excluded all Hopes of Pardon.

But that the Sin of our first Parents was not the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost is clear; for though they sinned against great Light, yet they obeyed, and complied with the Will of God, even when the Tempter came, until at last they were enticed and overcome, but they did not fall maliciously, and so were not excluded a Possibility of Mercy.

2. This Sin may be committed in Word too; that is, when a Man speaks blasphemously and maliciously of Christ and his holy Way: This was the Sin of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Mark 3. 22. There were certain Scribes came and said, This Fellow bath Belzebub, and casteth out Devils by the Prince of the Devils.* Therefore saith Christ unto them.

them, *Ver. 28, 29.. Verily I say unto you, all Sins shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men, and Blasphemies, wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of Eternal Damnation.*

Now the Reason of this Speech of our blessed Saviour is shewed in *Verse 22.* because they said, *he hath an unclean Spirit;* which plainly shews, that these Scribes had spoken Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: These Scribes were great learned Men, and thy could know no other but that Christ was the Son of God, and they knew that he cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, and yet they out of Spite to Christ, maliciously and blasphemously said, *That he cast out Devils by Belzebub the Chief of Devils.* Thus these Scribes committed the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost: and that in a Word.

3. This Sin may be committed in Action too; that is, when a Man being once thoroughly enlightned, and entered upon a holy Course of Life, and tasted the Comfort's of God's Spirit, and had some Foretast of the Joys of Heaven, and not only makes Profession of the Gospel, but teaches it to others; he at last takes a Dislike of these holy Courses, and thro' Spite

Spite and Malice, utterly forsakes, opposes and persecutes those good Ways of God, which he before profess and taught. But to sum up this Point; This unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, is fully described by the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. 10. 26, 27, 28. *For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation; how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace? Likewise, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if they fall away to renew them again to Repentance, seeing they Crucifie to themselves afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open Shame.*

Now the Sin against the Holy Ghost is briefly this: It is a wilful and malicious Opposing of the known Truth, joyn'd with final Apostacy.

I shall a little explain these Words, and then proceed:

I. This

1. This Sin unto Death is an opposing Sin; now to oppose a Thing is to contradict it, or gain-say it; when a Man says a Thing is so, and so, he denies it, and says it is not so; when a Man says a Thing must be done, he says again it must not, nor shall not be done; such an Opposition is in the Heart of him that commits this unpardonable Sin; but a Man may be an opposing Man, and yet cannot commit this Sin: Therefore,

2. It is the Truth that we must oppose; that is, he must utterly oppose and reject Christ, who said, *I am the Truth*, John 14. 6. He opposeth all his Threatnings, and will not believe his Promises, and counts him to be a Seducer of the People, and counts the Blood of the Covenant to be an unholy Thing; nay, he also opposes the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of Truth: So that he will not obey his Motions, and will not be led nor guided by him, but a Man may oppose the Truth, and yet do it ignorantly: Therefore,

3. It must be the known Truth that he opposeth; he must be once enlightned: But you must know, that it is not only a Notional Knowledge, and Humane Learning. He may know much of God, and of his Will in the Letter of the Word, and yet

yet not be capable of committing this unpardonable Sin: But we must be so far enlightened, as to see the Evil that is in Sin, and the Excellency of Christ; he must taste of the Heavenly Gift, and be made Partaker of the Holy Ghost; and taste of the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; and by the Blood of the Covenant which he counts as an unholy Thing, he is in part sanctified and cleansed from many Sins; he must have sweet Communion with God in his Word and Sacraments; he must have some Taste of the Love and Favour of God, and Comforts of his Spirit, and be refreshed by it, and taste of the Joys of Heaven, and have some Fore-taste of the Happiness of the World to come.

This is that Light and Knowledge that lays a Man open to the committing of that unpardonable Sin: But yet a Man may sin against all this Light and experimental Knowledge, and yet do it through the Weakness of the Flesh, or through some violent Temptation; as *Peter* did when he denied Christ: Therefore,

4. He must oppose the known Truth wilfully; he must wilfully fall away, after he hath received the Knowledge of the Truth: Other Sins are committed through

In-

Infirmity, but this Sin is wilful ; the Will is the chief Actor in it : And, to compleat and make up this unpardonable Sin, there is,

5. Malice in the Heart ; without this, this Sin cannot be committed ; it must be a malicious Opposing of the known Truth : that is, when a Man being once enlightened, and tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and the good Word of God, and hath been made a Partaker of the Holy Ghost ; and hath had some sweet Relish and Fore-taste of Heaven, he comes at last to take a Dislik-, and to hate the holy Ways of God, and maliciously oppose and persecute them, and to die in despite of the Spirit of Grace, Crucifying afresh the Son of God, and putting him to open Shame.

Now a Man having gone thus far, he comes in the last Place to be an Apostate : For thus to oppose wilfully and maliciously the known Truth, is always joyned with final and total Apostacy ; for he that is so far enlightened, as to see the Evil of Sin, and the Excellency of Christ and Holiness, and been made a Partaker of the Holy Ghost, of his Graces and Comforts ; and tasted of God's Love and Favour in Jesus Christ, and has some Fore-taste of the Joys of the World to come : Now for
such

such a one wilfully, spitefully, and maliciously to fall away, he so falls, as never to rise more. It is true, the Children of God fall, and that often, and yet rise again; but then they fall through Weakness or Infirmary, and not wilfully and maliciously; but these wicked Wretches fall wilfully and maliciously, and so fall finally. Against such, the Door of Mercy is ever shut: Concerning such, St. Peter saith, *It had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known to turn from the holy Commandments delivered unto them.* But it happened unto them according to the true Proverb, *The Dog is turned to his Vomit again; and the Sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire,* 2 Pet. 2. 21, 22. There is such another dreadful Place of Scripture against these kind of Apostates; *that is, Heb. 10. 26. For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation.* Thus I have given you five Steps, as so many Links in a Chain; all which makes up the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. It is a wilful and malicious Opposing of the known Truth, joined with final Apostacy. Thus I have shewed you, as plain as

I can, what this Sin unto Death is. Now to proceed :

Secondly, The next thing to be considered is, that all other Sins and Blasphemies whatsoever may be forgiven, be our Sins never so great and many, tho' we be the vilest Wretches that ever lived, yet there is Hopes of Pardon upon Repentance. *Mannasses* was the vilest Sinner that ever we read of, yet he repented and was pardoned : Also *Mary Magdalen* was the Chief of Sinners, for out of her came seven Devils ; yet, because she loved much, much was forgiven her. A Man may be a Whoremonger, an Adulterer, and work Witchcraft, and deal with familiar Spirits, and yet at last he may repent and be saved. And yet I have heard talk of some that are so foolish as to take the Sin of Fornication, to be a Sin unpardonable ; for from God's own Words in the Fourth Commandment, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the Sins of the Fathers unto the third and fourth Generation* : From whence they say, that Children that are base-born are not saved, unto the Third and Fourth Generation. But this is a most erroneous Interpretation of God's Word ; it is them that hate him, and continue hating of him, that he will visit their Iniquities

quities upon : For Fornicators and Adulterers themselves may repent and be saved, much more the Children who knew nothing, nor could help nothing : For Christ with his own Mouth tells the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matth. 21. 13.* that the Publicans and Harlots shall enter into the Kingdom of God before them ; for there is no Sin but is pardonable, except the Sin against the Holy Ghost. But,

Thirdly, The Sin against the Holy Ghost is alone the Sin unto Death ; that is, a Sin unpardonable, never to be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come : Not because the Merits of Christ is not sufficient to pardon it ; for this Sin, as well as other Sins, are but finite, whereas the Merits of Christ are infinite.

Object. But what is the Reason then that this Sin cannot be forgiven ?

Answ. This Question brings me to the fourth Thing considerable ; do but mind me a little, and I will, as plain and as clear as I can, tell you what the Reason is :

The Reason arises from the Nature of this Sin ; for this Sin, by whomsoever it is committed, hardens the Heart, and sears the Conscience, so that there is no place for Repentance to be wrought, neither for that, nor any other Sin. This Sin
is

is called the Sin against the Holy Ghost, not because it is a Sin against the Person of the Holy Ghost, for so is all Sin against his Person but it is called the Sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is against the Office and Work of the Holy Ghost. Now every one of the Three Persons have their particular Work: The Work of the Father is to create; the Work of the Son is to redeem lost Sinners; and the Work of the Holy Ghost is to enlighten, convince sanctifie and convert them. Now a Man committing this unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost rejects all this Work of the Spirit. Now for a Man to be thoroughly enlightened by the Holy Ghost, that he comes to know the Evil of Sin, and of his lost and undone Condition, without Christ, and that none but the Merits of Christ can save him, then for him, wilfully and maliciously, to oppose him, and the Work of his Spirit, and will not be beholding to him for Salvation, now for such a One to be forgiven, is utterly impossible.

Object. But why is it impossible? Nothing is impossible with God.

Ans. Nothing is impossible with God that does not imply a Contradiction; but for God to forgive the Sin committed against the Holy Ghost, implies a Contradiction

tion : For how can he have Pardon given him that utterly rejects it ? As for Instance :

A Man through Ignorance may deny Christ, and maliciously fall from the Profession of the Truth into all kind of Wickedness, as did St. *Paul*, and the Jews that Crucified Christ ; and yet not falling against Light and Knowledge, there is room for the holy Ghost to work upon him to enlighten him, and to convince him of his Folly, and so makes way for Conversion. And besides, a Man, after he hath been enlightned, and yet falls back through Infirmary, and the Weakness of the Flesh, as *Peter* did, and doth not fall wilfully and maliciously, then the Holy Ghost may work upon him and renew him again, and work in him a deep Sorrow, for abusing so much Love and Mercy, and so carry on his good Work unto Salvation. But for a Man when he is once enlightned by the holy Ghost, and has had some Taste of God's Love and Favour, and some Foretaste of the Joys of Heaven ; and then, at last utterly opposing this Illuminating Work of the Spirit, and wilfully and maliciously to fall away, and so to reject the Spirit's renewing Work : Alas ; then the holy Ghost has done, he has nothing more

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that

that he can work in him; for this wretched Creature has utterly rejected him; his Enlightning Work, his Convincing Work, his Sanctifying Work, he has utterly rejected Christ's Pardon, Heaven and all. Now this poor Wretch is past all hopes of Mercy, all hopes of Pardon; nay, for such a one we are forbidden to pray; as you see in the Verse, whereof my Text is a part. Now Christ prayed for them that maliciously crucified him, *Luke 23. 24. Saying, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Alas! they know not what they are doing; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory, *1 Cor. 2. 8.* But if they had known, and yet crucified him, Christ would not have spent his Breath to pray for them; for it would have been utterly in vain: for when a Man has committed this unpardonable Sin, neither the Prayers in Heaven, nor Earth can do him any Good: for as the Text saith, *There is a Sin unto Death.*

I shall conclude all with a few Words of Application; and will be as short as possible, because this Discourse will be too large for so small a Book. Here is,

First, A Word of Comfort.

Secondly, A Word of Counsel.

First,

First, A Word of Comfort: It may be with Hearing and Reading of this terrible Discourse, your Hearts begin to ake with Fear, that you have committed this unpardonable Sin: But I think I have sufficiently proved to you what it is; and I tell you again, that there are but few that can commit it; nay, there are Millions that are tormented in Hell, yet never committed this sin. Nay, farther, an ignorant Protestant, may through Weakness, and out of a slavish Fear turn Papist, and renounce his Profession, and yet not commit this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost: For doing it out of Ignorance and Infirmary, there may be Matter left for the Holy Ghost to work upon, whereby he may yet be converted and saved. Consider this also, if you are afraid that you have committed it, and wish that you had not committed it, if it were to do again, then that is a true sign that you have not committed it.

Secondly, I must conclude also with a Word of Counsel:

I. Watch very diligently against all sin; but above all, take special heed of those sins that are come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost, and they are these, Hypocrisie, taking only the outward Profes-

sion of Religion, and so dissembling and mocking of God ; sinning wilfully against Conviction of Conscience, and against great Light and Knowledge ; (sinning presumptuously, and with an high Hand :) These Sins, though none of them are the direct Sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they will come very near to it ; therefore take especial heed of them, lest they in time, should bring you to the committing of that unpardonable Sin. And,

II. Labour to be sincere in Religion, and by a true Faith ingraft your selves into Christ ; for they that be with Christ, can never commit this unpardonable Sin ; For know this, that amongst all these Sins committed by fallen Mankind, there is one Sin, *that is a Sin unto Death* : which is the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost ; which whosoever commits it hath no Forgiveness, neither in this World, or in the World to come.

Consider what has been said, and the Lord give you understanding.

The end of the First SERMON.

T H E

T H E

Saint's Duty and Exercise :

Or, An Earnest

Invitation to the Throne of G R A C E.

The First Part.

1 Thess. v. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

TO the Glory of God and the Good of Souls, there is no Subject more necessary for me to write upon than to stir up People to the Duty of Prayer, both in their Families and Secret ; I find it is a Duty most sadly neglected ; not only amongst the most Prophanie, but even amongst the Best : The prophane sort of People indeed, they seldom or never Pray in their Families, therefore it is to be feared much less do they Pray in Secret : But I have been amongst such as seem to be the best of People, that are just and righteous in their Dealings towards others, that love the Company of God's People, that delight to hear the best Preachers, and joyn

with

with the best Assemblies, and are very kind and courteous towards others, and yet they neglect Prayers in their Families. Some of them I know do pray in their Families on Evenings before they go to Bed. But as for those that make conscience of performing the Duty of Prayer in their Families both Morning and Evening, they are so few that there are but here and there one to be found of them: This is a Case very much to be bewail'd and lamented: Nay, in this one Duty I have just cause to condemn my self for I may write it with shame enough, that this Duty of Prayer has been too much neglected by me as well as by others; nay, to this day I find so much Averseness and backwardness to this Duty, so much Sloathfulness, Deadness, Dulness of Spirit, and sometimes one Lust or one Vanity or other steals into my Heart, which makes me think my self to be unfit for this Duty of Prayer, and I find it sometimes very hard to pass over all the Difficulties, and perform the Duty of Prayer aright. This makes me the more to pity others, looking upon them to be in the same Condition with my self. But consider Friends, this is the Work of the Devil, who does what he can either to keep us from Prayer, or else to disturb us in Prayer. So it was with the Children of

of God, *Job* 1. The Sons of God there came and presented themselves unto the Lord: But what to do? I answer, It was to Pray and make Supplication unto the Lord. Then it is said, that Satan came among them: But what did he come among them for? I answer, it was, if he could, to keep them from their Duty, or else to disturb them in their Duty, by filling them either with wandring and distracted Thoughts, thereby to cause them to lose the Benefit of the Duty. Alas! Friends, faithful Prayer is that which the Devil cannot endure; for there is no Weapon more powerful, for the weakening of Satan's Kingdom, and setting up the Kingdom of Christ in the Souls of Sinners, than Prayer is.

The Devil is content that we should read, and come to Church, and hear Sermons, without much disturbance, because he thinks he may easily keep us from profiting by the Word; but he labours with all his Might to keep us from Prayer and Meditation, because he knows that these Duties weaken his Kindom. But, my Friends, let not you and I any longer yield to Satan's Temptations, but resist him, and stir up our selves to take hold on God, and call upon his Name by constant fervent Prayer.

Certainly, if the Wickedness of the Sodomites grieved and vexed the Soul of righteous *Lot*, it would grieve him much more if he were now amongst us in this degenerate Age, and saw how Wickedness abounds in the World : how God is by one Judgment or another frowning upon us for our ungodly Doings ; how that the end of all things is near at hand, and yet how many Prayerless Persons and Families there are amongst us ; how Multitudes of People can rise in the Morning and go about their Concerns in the World, and then to Bed again at Night, and never regard to pray in their Families, but live as if they had not a God to seek, as if they had not an everlasting State to prepare for ; how Good or Religious soever they seem to be, yet their neglect of Prayer shews them to be yet in their Sins ; and therefore in a most miserable State and Condition. Friends, let me desire you to consider with me these few things.

First, Consider that your Neglect of Prayer is a Sign that you are none of God's Children, but you are yet in your unregenerate and unconverted State and Condition, and it were better that you had never been Born, than that you should die in such a Condition. O consider that your Breath is in the hands of God, and he
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may stop it whensoever he pleaseth; you cannot assure your selves of a Day or an hour to live: And is it not then a dangerous thing to live in the Neglect of Prayer? O Friends! How dare you to go forth in the Morning without Prayer, lest Death should meet you before Night, and cast you into Hell? Or how dare you lie down at Night in your Beds, before you have been at the Throne of Grace, and pleaded there with the Lord by Prayer, for Grace, Pardon and Mercy, lest you should awake before Morning in the Flames of Hell? O do but consider now and then upon this, how exceeding dangerous it is to live in the Neglect of Prayer. But if you have the Spirit of Prayer, if you give your selves up to constant fervent Prayer, this is a Sign of your New Birth: And whensoever Death comes you are safe. You know that a Child as soon as it is Born cries; so a Sinner as soon as he is Born again falls a crying unto God; as it was said of *Paul*, as soon as he was Born again, *Behold he Prayeth*, Acts 6. 11. It is the Spirit of Adoption that makes us cry, *Abba Father*, Rom. 1.

Secondly, Consider the End why God requires Prayer, and let that encourage you to the Duty. God does not require Prayer

that he may receive from us, for he is infinitely and perfectly happy without us, and therefore needs not our Performances, But God being willing to bestow those good things we need, and to communicate that Grace and Mercy, without which we are Miserable for ever, therefore it pleaseth God, out of his Infinite Goodness, to require Prayer, to make us fit for the Mercy which he knows we want; therefore the Lord commands us to *Pray always*. Luke 12. 36. *Pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man.* So 1 Tim. 3. 8. *Pray every where lifting up holy hands.* So Rom. 12. 22. *Continue instant in Prayer.* So Phil. 4. 6. *In every thing by Prayer and Supplication make your request known to God.* And also here in the Text, *Pray without ceasing.*

Thirdly, Consider whilst you are Strangers to Prayer, you are Slaves to the Devil, and he is doing what he can to work about your utter Ruin and Destruction: The Devil is said in Scripture to fill the hearts of the Ungodly, to keep possession of them, and to work in the Children of Disobedience. And truly the Devil finds abundance of Prey, for most watch not at all, Pray not at all against him: And these, that Pray not, are led captive by Satan at his

his Pleasure, and they do not care nor desire to have his Snare broken, nor themselves recover'd. Friend's, consider the more you neglect Prayer, the stronger your Corruptions will grow, and the more Sin will increase in you, and the more fit you will be for utter Ruin and Destruction. But on the other side, the oftner you Pray, and the more fervently you Pray, the more Sin and Corruption weakens in you, and the more fit you are for Grace and Mercy: As it is a most remarkable Speech among Mr. Dod's Sayings, *either Prayer will make a Man give over Sinning, or else Sin will make a Man give over Praying.* O therefore Friends, as ever you desire to be delivered from your Sins, as ever you desire to be delivered out of the Thralldom of the Devil, as ever you desire the Salvation of your Souls, as ever you desire to find Grace and Mercy at the Hand of God, be perswaded to give your selves to earnest fervent Prayer. But,

Fourthly, Consider those that are Strangers to Prayer, the God of Heaven is against them: Oh dreadful! who are they that can stand before his Indignation? Who can defend himself against that Arm that is Omnipotent? The Mountains quake, the Hills melt, and the very Devils tremble
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before this God. Surely it is dreadful to have so glorious and great a God an Enemy : But an Enemy he is to all them that do not count his Favour and Mercy worth the Praying for : Those that do not intreat this God to be reconciled, now whilst he offers to be reconciled to them, it is a Sign they neither value his Love, nor fear his Wrath : therefore his Wrath they must abide, except they do in good earnest seek unto him.

Fifthly, Consider they that are Strangers to Prayer, and will not cry to God, now in the Day of their Visitation, whilst Pardon and Mercy may be had, they must look to be neglected when they are forc'd to cry, when a time of Misery and Distress comes upon them. O read and tremble at the Place in *Prov.* 2. 26, 27, 28. *I will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh ; when your Fear cometh as a Desolation, when Distress and Anguish comes upon you : Then they shall call upon me but I will not answer : They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.* My Friends, if you will not seek the Lord now, whilst he may be found, if you will not call upon him now whilst he is near, *Isa.* 11. 6. you may at last be forced to cry in your Extremity, and not be regarded.

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Sixthly, Consider you that live in the Neglect of Prayer, that quickly the accepted Time, which you improve not, will be past and gone; and then you shall beg, yea, and beg earnestly, but must certainly be denied. We read in Scripture, of Calls that have not been regarded; the foolish Virgins came after the Door was shut, and cryed, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*: But alas! they spoke when it was too late, therefore the Reply was, *I know you not whence you are*, Matth. 26. 10, 11, 12. When the Rich Man in Hell begged for a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue, this was not granted, *Luke* 16. to intimate that not the least Mercy in Hell is to be expected, nor the least Mitigation of Torments is to be looked for; all then will be ready to Pray, *Lord open the Door that lets into thy Kingdom and Glory*: Lord, vouchsafe a little Respite, a little Ease in the midst of our Torment. O but then God's Ear will be stop'd, Heavens's Gate will be shut, and Mercy will be gone for ever. O what a Madness is it then to waste all our precious time, and not come to the Throne of Grace, before the Day of Grace comes to an end.

Seventhly and Lastly, If you live in the Neglect of Prayer, our common Mercies
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and Benefits, they are no Mercies to you, for that Threatning is fulfilled upon them, Mat. 22. *I will send a Curse upon you, and will Curse your Blessings.* Prayer will turn Curses into Blessings, Afflictions are part of the Curse which are inflicted because of Sin: But Prayer alters the Nature of them, and turns them into Mercies and Blessings; for the Sanctification of them being begged by Prayer, and granted, they work together for the good of them; For, saith the Apostle, *Afflictions yield the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.* On the other side, where Prayer is not, their Blessings are turned into Curses, and the good Things which are received, work together for the Shame and Ruin of those that do enjoy them. There is a Spirit of Slumber that hath seized on them in the midst of their Enjoyments, their Table, their Plenty, Meat, Drink and Cloaths, all becomes a Snare unto them, and so they abuse their Mercies to God's Dishonour, and their utter Ruin and Destruction; yea, the Word of God which is read and heard. where the Blessing of the Word is prayed and begged for, there it becomes an Humbling Word, a Softning Word, a Sin-killing Word, a Soul-saving Word, and a Sa-
your

vour of Life unto Life; but where Prayer is wanting, there ordinarily the Word hardens and becomes a Saviour of Death unto Death. In a word, as common Mercies are made a Curse unto Prayerless Persons, so if they continue in the neglect of Prayer, they must certainly miss of those especial saving Mercies revealed in the Gospel; as Pradon of Sin, Justification by Christ, Adoption, Sanctification by the Spirit, Deliverance from Hell, Eternal Happiness in the World to come; and God hath determined and declared in his Word, that those that will have these things, must seek them: But if they seek them not by earnest fervent Prayer, it is a Sign they understand not the worth of them, nor yet their own great Need of them, and therefore must certainly and justly go without them. God is not so prodigal of his Mercies and Favours as to sling them away upon those Persons that do not think them worth the Praying for. These Considerations I have given you as an Introduction to the Matter ensuing, that you may be the more stirred up to mind what I have more to write: And if you have hitherto neglected Prayer, that you would now in good earnest set about it. O you that are Strangers to Prayer! consider that
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you are all this while in a most woful and miserable Condition; for you are in your Sins, Slaves to the Devil, meer Strangers to God, and under his Wrath and Curse: and if you should Die in this Condition, you are undone for ever. And will you not seek unto the Lord by earnest fervent Prayer, that you may be delivered out of this Condition?

You want a Pardon, you want Christ and Grace, and you are undone if you have not these Soul Blessings, and you will not ply the Throne of Grace for the obtaining of them: Friends, if you did but seriously consider your Straits and your Wants, you would find it necessary to obey the Words of the Apostle here in the Text, *To Pray without ceasing*. Now the Point of Doctrine which I shall raise from these Words is this That it is both the Duty and Work of every true Christian, to *Pray without ceasing*. Now in my further handling of this Point concerning Prayer, I shall endeavour, *First*, To shew what Prayer is. *Secondly*, What it is to Pray continually. *Thirdly*, To shew some Reasons why we ought to Pray without ceasing. And *Lastly*, to make Application.

First, What Prayer is: in short, Prayer is an earnest fervent Offering up our Desires

fires to God by Faith, in the name of Jesus Christ, for those good things that are agreeable to God's Will, and our own Necessity : now there must concur these two things to make up the Duty of Prayer, 1st, An earnest and fervent Desire, a longing Desire after those Graces and Blessings we come to God for ; for there are some that come frequently to the Throne of Grace, and offer a Form of Words in a Praying Way, I say, a Form of Words, either composed ready to their hand, or else of their own composing : And so they come to God with an expression of Words without any hearty Desire after those Graces and Mercies they seem to Pray for ; but their Desires run out after other things, after their Lust, their Covetousness, and after the things of this World ; and yet they will seem to Pray mightily against Sin and Fleshly Lusts, which they have no desire to be rid of ; and for the obtaining of those Graces and Spiritual Mercies, which they are not sensible of their want of, nor have any Desire to attain. But yet they will often make use of Prayer, either as a Veil to hide and cover their Wickedness, and to shew themselves to the World to be Religious, or else as a Device, to quiet their Consciences in a Course of Sin ; and so

fo they make Confession of Sin, to serve instead of forsaking of Sin; and Praying, instead of Repenting. Now such a kind of Prayer is abominable to the Lord; yea, this kind of Praying, is indeed no Praying, but only Babling, Dissembling and Mocking of God; yea, it is a Lying unto God: *Ephraim*, saith God, *compasseth me about with Lies*, *Hos. 12. 5. 12.* Hypocrites do not Pray, but instead of Praying, they tell Lies unto God; they make as if they had a desire to know God, to love and obey God, to be Holy and Heavenly, when indeed they have no Heart, no Desire to any such thing. Of this sort were the Scribes and Pharisees, as Christ complains against them, *Matth. 15. 7. 8.* *Ye Hypocrites, well might Esaias prophesie of you saying, This People draweth nigh to me with their Mouths, and honoureth me with their Lips, but their Hearts are far from me.* Yea, there is a sad Woe pronounced against such, *Matth. 23. 3, 4.* *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for you devour Widows Houses, and for pretence make long Prayers; therefore you shall receive the greater Damnation.* This is the first Concurrence to make up the duty of Prayer, which is a hearty and fervent Desire after those Graces and Good Things we pretended to pray for, without which
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our Praying is no Praying, but Babling and Mocking of God. 2^{dly}, The other Concurrence to make up the Duty of Prayer, is this: An Offering up of our Desires either with the Mind or Voice; for if our Desires are never so great to attain Grace and Mercy; yet if we do not offer these Desires up with Mind or Voice, our having of these Desires alone is not Praying; but where there are hearty fervent Desires after Grace and Mercy; and these Desires are expressed, either by Sighing, Groaning, Whispering, Speaking, or by Voice; this is Praying indeed. And this shall be sufficient to shew what Prayer is.

Secondly, The next thing I promis'd to shew is, what it is to Pray without ceasing. Now to pray without ceasing is not to do like unto that Sect, who thought that Prayer was to be their whole Business: No, no, there are other Duties which God hath required; and Prayer must not come in the way of other Duties, to shuffle them out. But in general, to Pray without ceasing implies a taking hold of, and improving of all those Seasons and Opportunities, wherein God and our own Necessities calls us unto Prayer: This is to Pray without ceasing. It is said of *Mephibosheth*, that he did eat continually at the King's Table

2 Sam. 9. 13. Now what shall we understand from this? Shall we think that he did nothing else Day or Night but eat? No such Matter; but he was always present at Meals, when the Season or Meal-time came: Even so to pray without ceasing, is to pray always, whensoever Prayer is seasonable. But more particularly to pray without ceasing, implies,

First, A being always on a Disposition and Frame to Pray, whensoever God requires it. The heart must be reconciled to this Duty of Prayer, and fall in Love with it, and come to the Throne of Grace with Delight, and also be continually resisting of that Backwardness and Indisposition to Prayer whenever the Season of Prayer approacheth, and always to watch our hearts to keep them in a Praying Frame.

Secondly, To pray without ceasing, implies a Praying in every State and Condition of Life it pleaseth God to call us to: for without Prayer, Sicknes will be unsanctified, and health will be a Judgment; without Prayer, health and Prosperity will be a Snare, and will occasion a Forgetfulness of God, and a daring to Rebel against him, and will serve to encourage a Neglect of the Soul, and of another World; and
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without Prayer, Adversity will be Intolerable, and if it be removed, it will be in Anger. Thus no Condition should cause a Neglect of Prayer.

Thirdly, To Pray without ceasing, implies a persevering in Prayer, a continual Wrestling with God in Prayer, and never to give over until we have our Request granted. God in his Wisdom is pleased sometimes to cause us to stay long for a Mercy before it comes, but to make thee Mercy the sweeter to us when it comes, and also for the Tryal of his Peoples Patience, whether they will persevere and continue waiting at the Throne of Grace: And those that are true Believers will be content to wait, and to wait in God's Way, until their Prayers are granted; so did the Woman of *Canaan* when she came to Christ for Mercy, wait, though at her first Suit, Christ gave her no Answer at all, yet she notwithstanding continued her Suit, with more Earnestness, crying after him: But then Christ, though he spake, yet gave her a seeming Denial, and told her, That he was not sent but only to the lost Sheep of the House of *Israel*. And yet she would not give over, but cryed again for Help; but yet instead of helping her, he called her a Dog, and told her, that it was not
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met to take the Childrens Bread, and cast it to the Dogs. Then instead of leaving off her Suit, she came to Christ with great Humility : she acknowledged herself to be a Dog ; she acknowledged her own unworthiness of Mercy ; but yet she despaired not, but by Faith pleaded Christ's Mercy and Bounty, telling him, *Though I being a Dog, am not worthy to be made Partaker of the Childrens Bread, yet the Dogs may eat of the Crumbs that falls from their Master's Table.* This shews how thankful she would have been for the least Crumbs of Mercy : Whereupon Jesus Christ immediately commended the greatness of her Faith, and as it were gave her the Key of his Treasure, and bid her take whatsoever she wanted, whether Mercy for her self, or Mercy for her Daughter : *O Woman great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Further, that we might be encouraged to persevere in Prayer without fainting, Christ records to us this Parable, to the end that Men ought always to Pray, and not to faint, *Luke 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.* I desire you to take your Bibles and read the Place at your Leisure. Friends, tho' you Pray, Seek and Wait long for Power against your Corruptions, for Assurance, and for the Sense of God's Love even to the end of your Days,
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yet if you can but overcome at last, and get safe to Heaven, that will make amends for all your Praying, Waiting, Labouring and Suffering. O therefore let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not, *Psal.* 6. 9. Thus I have shewed what Prayer is, and what it is to pray without ceasing.

Thirdly, The next thing is to give some Reasons why it is the Duty and Work of every Christian to pray without ceasing.

First, We should pray continually, because God is always ready to hear; and tho' God knows our wants, and is ready at all times to bestow upon us whatsoever we want, yet the Lord in his Wisdom would have us wait upon him by fervent Prayer for those spiritual good Things we want; not that Prayer moves God, but because continual fervent Prayer makes us fit to receive the Mercy we come unto him for; if God should bestow his especial saving Mercy upon a Sinner before he is fit for it, the Mercy would be but little prized by him, and God would have but little return of Praise and Thanks from him. Therefore, for this Reason, God will be sought unto for his especial Mercies before he will bestow them: After God had promised to pardon, renew, and to hear *Is-*

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rael yet he appoints a Prayer as a Means to bring down these Mercies before he will bestow it upon them, *Ezek. 36. 37.* For all this, *I will be enquired of by the House of Israel to do this for them.* Consider, Friends Pardon is ready, and already purchased for you by the Blood of Christ; Grace is ready, Christ is ready, and Mercy is ready to embrace you Sinners. God waits but for your seeking unto him for these Mercies, and you shall have them; therefore if you perish for ever for want of these saving Mercies, the Fault is not in God, but in your selves, because you will not seek unto God by hearty Prayer for Grace and Mercy. God is said to look down from Heaven to see if there were any that would seek after God. *Psal. 14. 3.* And he is ready to Pardon, Justifie, Sanctifie, and Save them, whensoever they seek unto him. Friends, a hearty seeking of God never was in vain, nor never will be.

Secondly, We must Pray without ceasing continually, because Christ is continually a Praying for us; Christ prayed Night and Day for us, when he was upon Earth, even until he was in an Agony, and now he is in Heaven, he makes continual Intercession for us, *Heb. 7. 2, 5.* Christ in Heaven is always presenting to his Father his Sufferings, and
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by his Suffering and Blood-shed, all that we Pray for has been purchased; the Blood of Jesus Christ cries in God's Ears on the behalf on those that pray that the Curse that Christ hath bore might be removed from them, that the Sins for which Christ was wounded may be forgiven them; that out of his Fulness they may receive Grace for Grace; and that for his sake they may be delivered from the Wrath to come. Now Friends, shall Christ pray for us so long, and so fervently, until he was in an Agony, and still prays for us in Heaven, and yet will we lose the Benefit of all for want of Praying for our selves? O for Shame! seeing Christ doth his part let us do ours.

Thirdly, We must pray without ceasing, because the Spirit is always ready to help our Infirmities, *Rom. 1.* The Spirit is ready to instruct us what to Pray for; as to remove the Load of Indisposition to this Duty, to quicken our Deadness in the Duty, to enlarge our Desires after Grace, and to strengthen us to wrestle for a Blessing: And truly God is not to be prevailed with, but by the Mediation of his Son, and by the Help and Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

Fourthly, We must Pray continually, because Satan is always ready to assault us;

he said, *go about like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. Satan is never Idle, he is always following us with Snares of Temptations; our Life is full of Temptations; and shall not we be continually praying against Satan and his Assaults? Wicked Spirits are continually engag'd against us: *We Wrestle*, said the Apostle, *with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedness in high Places*, Eph. 6. 12. These Enemies are invincible, and therefore it is the more difficult to withstand them; they are too subtle, and too strong for us; we had need therefore to Pray without ceasing, seeing they cease not, endeavouring to bring us both to Sin and Ruin.

Fifthly and Lastly, We should Pray without ceasing, because our Corruptions quickly get Strength upon the least neglect of Prayer. If by our Watching, Praying and Wrestling with God, we have got some Strength and Power against our Corruptions, as Anger, Pride, Covetousness, *Fleshly Lusts*, Sensuality and our Affections are moved, and inflamed towards God and Heavenly things, and we are got into a State of Grace, yet if we once let down our Watch and neglect Prayer, our Corruptions will get strength again, and our
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Graces will decay, and our Love to God and Holy things will decay : Now all these things consider'd, we may see that it is necessary for us to take care that we be not careless, slight and negligent in our Performance of this Duty of Prayer, but to stir up our selves in the performance of this Duty, and to pray without ceasing.

Thus I have done with the Doctrinal Part : But before I proceed, I shall answer an Objection or two which may lie in my Way.

One Objection which some will make, is this, whether they ought to Pray with a Form : Some there be that hold with a Form of Prayer, and some be against it.

Now in answering this Objection, I shall endeavour to reconcile both Parties : You must note, that there are two kinds of Prayer commanded by God : First, Publick or Family-prayer. Secondly, Secret-prayer.

For the first of these, if it be about Publick or Family-prayer, and you are the Speaker, it is most convenient for you to pray in a set Form of Words, suited to the general Necessities of those that joyn with you, and which are suited to the Sins and Wants of Mankind in general throughout the World. Such Forms as these are already compos'd by many eminent Divines:

I say, in Publick or Family-prayer, it is most convenient to pray in such a set composed Form of Words, that those which join with you being acquainted with your Matter; may with more readines go along with you in your Expressions. And as for the lawfulness of those Forms, consider, that Christ hath given us a set Form of Prayer, which is the *Lord's Prayer*; now this Form Christ hath given us, both to be a Rule and Pattern to direct us in Prayer, and also to be used in our Prayers; the Command of Christ in *Mat. 6.* is in these Words, *After this manner Pray ye*; this is to teach us, that the *Lord's Prayer* is given us not only to be used as a Form, but also to be a Rule for directing of us to pray according to that pattern. But in *Luke 11.* the Command of Christ is in these Words, *When you Pray, say Our Father, &c.* This is also to teach us, that the *Lord's Prayer* is used not only in pattern or Rule, but also as a Form to be used at the end of our publick or Family-prayers.

To conclude this, Writers Record, that Forms were used when our Saviour Christ was upon the Earth, and Christ joyn'd with them in those Forms. And yet Christ neither contradicted those Forms, nor blamed them for using them. Therefore

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your Objection be concerning Publick or Family-prayer, I have sufficiently answered that.

But *Secondly*, If your Objection be concerning Secret-prayer, I shall soon resolve you in that: If you ask, Whether you ought to pray in Secret by a Form? This is the same thing as if you should ask, Whether a Man ought to make use of his Legs, or make use of Crutches to walk with? For you all know, that if a Man be Lame, and cannot use his Legs, he ought to walk by Crutches until he can have the use of his Legs, and then he afterwards ought to use his Legs, and fling his Crutches aside: Even so those that have hitherto been Strangers to Prayer, and also to themselves, who are weak, and have not yet attained unto the gift of Prayer, and therefore they know not how to pray these ought to pray by a Form, and to make use of such Forms as may lead them to the Knowledge of their own particular Sins, and their own Necessities; and then as soon as they can come to know themselves, their own particular Sins and Wants, so as to confess them, their own Corruptions and Inclinations, so as to lament over them, their own Temptations, so as to pray against them; also their own Wants, that they

they may beg of God to have them supply'd, then they ought no longer to use a Form, but to lay it aside, as useless, because they are able to express their own particular Wants without it. And besides, there are no written Forms of Prayer, that can suit with the State and Condition of every particular Christian; for one Christian is under one Circumstance, and another under another; therefore every one ought to study his own Sins, Temptations and Wants, and then fall to Prayer, according as he finds his own Condition to be. But, for a Man under whatsoever Circumstance he be, yet for him to use a Form, it is a Sign he prays for he knows not what. To give you an Instance or two: Suppose you were a Condemned Malefactor, and were going to the King to beg a Pardon, you would not need a written Form of Words to carry with you, for your own Condition would teach you what to say when you come there. Or, suppose a Beggar should come to your Door in a miserable Condition, ready to starve with Hunger, you would soon hear how hard he will beg, what Complaints he will make, and what Arguments he will use to move your Pity, without a written Form of Words. Even so, if you have but a true
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Sight and Sense of your Sin and Misery, and of your Want of such and such Soul-Mercies, you would not need a written Form to teach you what to say to God, when you come to the Throne of Grace.

Thus I hope I have sufficiently satisfied you in answering this Objection, Whether you ought to Pray by a set Form or no?

But now to answer one Objection more, and that is, whether a Wicked Man may Pray or not, seeing the Scripture tells us, That the Prayers of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord.

I Answer, That a Wicked Man, however ought to Pray, because whilst he is Praying he is using God's Ordinances: And who knows but that it may please God to bless it to him for the good of his Soul, and bring him to Pray from his Heart? And besides, there is no Wicked Man, but he has now and then some good Desires wrought in him, by the common working of God's Spirit, and these Desires he ought to express to God by Prayer; and so far his Prayers will be accepted; and so he may be fitted for the Work of Grace to be wrought in him, and God has promised, that they which draw near to him, he will draw near to them. But if he wholly cast off Prayer, he goes further from God, and so

runs the High-road to Hell and Destruction.

Thus, having done with the Doctrinal Part, and answer'd these Objections, I come now to the Application: The first Use shall be a Use of Lamentation: If it be such a necessary Duty of every Christian to pray without ceasing; then what shall we think of those that never pray, neither with their Families, nor yet in Secret; They mind nothing but the things in this World, and the Lust of the Flesh, but never seek after God: Sure these must needs be in a sad miserable Condition. This is a Lamentation, and must be for a Lamentation.

Secondly, The next Use shall be of Caution; let us be cautioned against these two things:

First, Let us take heed of a Form of dull careless and heartless Performances of this Duty of Prayer. Now that this may be avoided, take heed of rushing unpreparedly into God's Presence. But if you ask how shall I do to prepare my self aright for this Duty of Prayer, I answer, if you would pray so as your Prayers may be accepted and granted, you must follow these Directions.

1. Before you go to Prayer, study the Knowledge of your selves; examine how the Case stands between God and your Souls,

Souls, and which way your Desires run ; and if you find that your Desires run Heaven-wards, then examine the Matter of your Desires, what it is you would have God to do for you : Study your Sins and Wants, what Corruptions you desire to be rid of, and what Graces you would have God bestow upon you. If you do not acquaint your selves with your Case beforehand, you cannot expect to know it aright on a sudden, as you go to Pray ; if you do not actually look into your Hearts and Lives, before you go to Prayer, your Souls will be unhumbled, and want that lively Sense of your Necessities which must put Life into your Prayers. Before you pray, consider what Sin is, what God's Wrath and Hell is, and what Lust and Corruptions are yet in you, and what Grace and Mercy you stand in need of. And this will make you Pray, and Pray to purpose with all your Heart. But when Men are wilful Strangers unto themselves, and never look back nor inwards to see what was amiss and wanting, nor look forward to see the Danger that is before them, no wonder if their Hearts are dead and dull ; and they are as unfit to pray, as a sleeping Man is to work.

2. As you go to Prayer, take heed of vain and sinful Thoughts, that they do not

come in and spoil the Duty : To this end, Watch your Heart, your Thoughts, and your Affections very carefully ; otherwise some beloved Vanity will alienate them from the Work in Hand, and it will turn away your Thoughts, and possess your Affections, so that you will want them when you shall use them in Prayer : If the Mind be set on other things, Prayer will be a heartless, lifeless thing : Alas ! how dead and pitiful is the Prayer of him that hath his Heart ensnared with the Love of Money, Pleasures or any lustful Desires ? The Thoughts will easily follow the Affections.

3. When you come to God by Prayer, come in such Humility as beseemeth a condemned Sinner, and yet in the Faith and Boldness that beseemeth a Son and Member of Jesus Christ ; do not conceive a Conceit of any Worthiness in your selves ; yet take heed of any despairing Thoughts in Prayer ; But be as confident in every lawful Request you ask, as if you saw your glorify'd Redeemer interceeding for you with his Father. Faith and Hope is the life of Prayer ; and Christ is the life of Hope : If you Pray and think you shall never be the better for Praying, your Prayer will but have little Life ; therefore let a Crucified and Glorified Christ be always before your Eyes

in Prayer, not in a Picture, but in the Thoughts of a believing Mind. See what the Apostle saith to the Hebrews, *Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. We have a great High-Priest that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, that was in all Points tempted as we are, and yet without Sin. Let us come therefore with boldness to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and have Grace to help in the Time of Need. Also Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God thro' him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. Yea, we have a gracious Promise by Christ himself for our Encouragement, John 14. 13. If you ask any thing in my Name, I will do it.*

4. Labour hard with your Hearts all the time you are Praying, to keep them in a reverent, serious, fervent Frame, and suffer them not to grow remiss and cold, to turn Prayer into Lip-labour, or into a Lifeless Formality; the Heart may be senseless, though the Voice seem to be earnest; and therefore the heart must be carefully watched and diligently stirred up. A cold Prayer shews a cold Heart, in desiring that which is Prayed for; and therefore is unfit to receive the Mercy God will make you know that his Mercies are not contemptible, but worthy of your most earnest Prayers.

5. In the last Place, the other Caution I shall lay before you is this : After you have done Prayer, take heed of contenting your selves with the bare Performance of the Duty, thinking that your Work is done, when Prayer is over ; but carefully examine how you have sped in Prayer ; examine how your Thoughts have been ; and in what Frame your Hearts have been whilst you have been Praying, and then watch for a Return of Prayer. A great many pray, and when they have done, they never think of their Prayers, nor how they have sped, until they return to their Prayers again. And this is a great Cause that makes many Prayers to be lost : Therefore do not think you have done enough, when you have done praying : But watch for a return of Prayer. *David* had been Praying, and then he was resolved to hearken what the Lord would speak, *Psalms* 85. 8. So the Church, believing that the Lord would hear, resolves to wait for him, *Micah* 7. 7. *Therefore will I look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my Salvation ; my God will hear me.* Friends, if you do not watch for Returns of Prayer, you do not consider what you do, or whom, you have to do with in Prayer. When you Pray you engage in an Ordinance ; and shall that

that be used in vain? You are therefore to stand upon your Watch-tower, and to observe, with the Prophet, what God saith to you, *Hab. 2. 1.* That is the Second Use.

Thirdly, The third and last Use shall be of Exhortation; for the stirring of you all up, both to Family and Secret-prayer: as for Family-prayer; O be perswaded for the Lord's sake, for Christ's sake, who interceeds for you, and for your Soul's sake, that you would make conscience of Family-prayer; not only in the Evening, but every Morning and Evening: This is a Duty that is most sadly neglected in this Age: O for the sake of your immortal Souls, do not suffer your Company, Business, and Delights of the World and Flesh, to rob you of God's Love, and to ruin your Body and Soul in Hell for ever. Let me perswade you to take this Counsel, that what Company soever is at your House at unseasonable Times, tell them thus: *This is no Time for you to be here; it is Time for you to be with your God; it is Time for you to be at Home, Reading and Praying in your Families:* But if you cannot shake off your Company and Business in Time, then do as *Abraham* did *Gen. 22. 4.* Who saith to the young Men, *Tarry you here whilst I and this*
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Lad go yonder and Worship. So say you to your Company and Business, and to your Worldly Thoughts, Tarry you here whilst I and my Family go and Worship God. Consider, Friends, your Souls are more worth than ten thousand Worlds; and you had better neglect any thing in this World, than to neglect your Souls. Let all the Business in the world go whither it will, rather than lose Heaven; for that will be a dreadful Loss indeed. Alas! what a dreadful thing is it, that Death and Judgment shall be so near, and Eternity at the Door, and yet there should be so few Praying Families. But, having said something for the perswading you to Family Prayer, in my Sermon of *Joshua's* Resolution, I need say no more of it here.

Therefore *2dly*, let me exhort you also to Secret-prayer; for it is to be feared, that this is also very much neglected amongst us: Nay, it is not only neglected amongst loose prophane Sinners, but also it is to be feared it is sadly neglected by Professors, and those that are constant Performers of Family-duties. Many that make conscience of praying in their Families both Night and Morning, yet follow them to their Chambers or Closets, and you shall see nothing of Secret-prayer. Friends, I
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can tell you, and that by woful Experience too, that to Pray aright, is the hardest Work in Religion; and that by-reason of those many Oppositions, Pull-backs, and Hindrances to this Duty. Secret-Prayer is the greatest Enemy the Devil has; he cannot endure that People should go to Pray in Secret, because no Duty can be more powerful in the pulling down of Satan's Kingdom in the Soul, and setting up the Kingdom of Christ, than Secret Prayer is: The Devil is well content that People should set about any outward Duty of Religion, as, reading the Scripture, hearing of Sermons, and praying in their Families, so as all be done in a cold, formal and lifeless Way, without any great Opposition; but for People to go and pour out their Souls to God in secret, confess their own particular Sins and daily Infirmities, bemoaning their Case to God, bewailing their inbred Corruptions, lamenting over a hard Heart, a blind Mind, a dead and dull Spirit, a hearty begging for Pardon, for Deliverance from Sin, for Power against Corruption, for Strength against the evil Lusting of the Flesh, begging for Grace and a new Nature, and a new Life: Now this Work, together with frequent Meditation, and Self-Examination, these

Duties

Duties the Devil opposeth with all his Might, no Weapons can be more strong for the rooting out of Corruptions, for fighting against Satan, and overcoming of him, than these Spiritual Weapons. We have naturally a slothful sluggish Spirit, a dull and backward Heart; the flesh craves its Ease, the World with its Profits and Pleasures, and the Flesh with its evil Lustings, yea, and the Devil he comes in and makes use of all these for the opposing of us, for the keeping of us off, and for the hindring of us in these secret Duties; the Devil is so loth to let go his hold of the Sinner, therefore he labours with all his Might, if it be possible, to keep him in the Chain of his Sin. Therefore there must be great fighting against those Soul-Enemies, striving against those Oppositions, and so a wrestling with God by Secret-prayer, and a taking the Kingdom of Heaven by Violence, if ever we mean to come there.

Consider, That Secret prayer, if fervent, is a striving against Sin and Corruption; for whenever we are striving with God, we are striving against Sin: for Duty and Sin strive for the Victory: Whilst Duty holds up, Sin goes down; but when Duty flags, Sin gets up. Secret-prayer, if hearty, will make us weary of sinning, or else Sin will

will make us weary of such kind of Praying: And if Secret-prayer once be a Wearisomness to us, it is a sad Sign that Sin gets the upper-hand; there cannot be a more effectual Way for a Sinner to kill his Sin, than by Secret-prayer; a Sinner never fights against Sin with a greater Zeal, nor with greater Success than upon his Knees; when once a Sinner comes to kneel in earnest before God, his Lusts must quickly kneel to him! Our confessing of Sin, and laying of it open before the Lord, our complaining to the Lord of it, our crying to the Lord against it, pressing him upon his Promise, upon his Covenant to help it; these are the mightiest Batteries that we can make for the beating down the Strongholds of Sin. But where Secret-prayer is neglected, there the Sinner lies open to all Temptations, Sin, Lust, and Uncleaness. O therefore be perswaded to be often and frequent in this Duty of Secret-prayer. Friends, what do you say? Will you mind and do this one thing; that is, to give yourselves unto Secret-prayer? There is no Exhortation that can be given, will ever prosper with you, if this Exhortation do not: It is in vain to perswade you to live a Holy Life, if you do not live a Praying Life. O be perswaded to be instant and

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constant in Secret-prayer ; set your Times for Secret-prayer, and keep your Times, and make a firm Resolution with your selves to do it. I have read of a godly Divine, who had upon a Time, some Conference with some of his Hearers, concerning the State of their Souls ; they gave him some Hopes of a Work of Grace begun in their Hearts : But then, upon farther Enquiry, he found there still to be a neglect of Secret-prayer : Now this cast such a Damp upon his Spirits, that it brought down his Hope to be as low as nothing.

Friends, Consider that Secret-prayer is the very Life of Religion, if it be sincere and fervent ; and if you would but be persuaded to make true Conscience of that, then there would be Hopes indeed of the Work of Grace begun in you. Now for the further stirring you up to the Duty of Secret-prayer, consider these four things :

First, Consider that if you make conscience of Secret-prayer daily and frequently, this would be an evident Sign of your Uprightness and Sincerity ; it is a Sign that you seek God himself, when none but God knows of your seeking of him. He is not a true Christian outwardly, but he is a true Christian that is one inwardly, whose Praise is not of Men but of God, *Rom. 22. 28. 29.*

But

But he that lives in the neglect of secret Duties though he pass in the World to be never so good a Christian, yet he is in God's Account no better than a Hypocrite.

Secondly, Consider Secret-Prayer is a marvellous Way to thrive in Grace, and to grow rich towards God. By this means, Faith will grow exceedingly, our Love to God will abound, or Souls will prosper. A Christian that is much in secret with God, O what a great Benefit does he reap thereby! How good does he find God to be unto his Soul; so that he can by experience say with the Psalmist, *Psal. 16. 5. That he is plenteous in Mercy to all that call upon him.*

Thirdly, Consider that Secret-prayer is a Means to fit you for Publick Ordinances: Those that are the most upon their Knees in their Chamber or Closet, will receive most Benefit in publick: God must be sought unto in secret to fit us for Publick Worship; those that before they come to hear, pray earnestly in Secret, that the Gospel may come to 'em not in the Word only, but in Power also, for the cutting down the Strong-hold of Sin, and for the building them up in Grace and Holiness, those are likely to find the Gospel working effectually upon them, and that is the Power of God for their Salvation, *Rom. 1. 14.* Those
that

that before they come to the Lord's Supper, examine themselves alone, beg that God would search them; and are importunate with God for Strength against every Corruption, as Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Anger, Malice; also against a hard Heart, Sluggishness and Dulness of Spirit, disordered Affections, Self-Love, Sensuality, and the like; they also that beg for all the Fruits of Christ's Sufferings, and for all the Graces of his Spirit, such as these are not like to be sent empty away.

Fourthly, Consider Secret-prayer is a Means to keep publick Duties upon the Heart, after Publick Exercise is ended. Your Work is not done when publick Exercise is over; but you are immediately, as soon as you come home, to go alone, and in secret to pray over the Word which you have heard; Thus; First, has any Sin been laid open to you, wherein you know your selves to be guilty? Then confess it, and bewail it, and beg pardon for it, and for strength against it; and resolve to set your selves against it for the time to come: Secondly, has any Duty been pressed upon you? then mention to God this Duty in secret, to incline your Heart to perform this Duty.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Consider, Secret-prayer is the Way to have especial Tokens of God's Love, and those Joys that a Stranger does not intermeddle with. O the sweet Meltings and Thawings of the Heart for Sin, that the Saints meet with in Secret-prayer! O the Visits that the great Physician of Souls does make to poor Sinners in this Duty! And the inward Joy, Peace and Comfort, that the Saints do meet with in their secret Addresses unto God by Prayer! And Friends, should not this be a great Encouragement to you to be frequent in Secret prayer? But if all this be not Encouragement enough,

Consider in the *Sixth* and *Last* place, that if you daily and frequently pray in secret, meditate and examine your selves, and take pains with your own Hearts in secret, God will reward you openly. This is the Argument that Christ useth to inforce Secret Prayer, *Mat. 6. 6. When thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet and shut the Door, and Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* As secret Wickedness shall be openly punished, so shall secret Duties be openly rewarded, before Men and Angels at the last Day.

Now Friends, if all these Arguments will not prevail with you to the Exercise of
daily

daily fervent Prayer, I know not what will prevail with you. But only let me tell you this, even as you find it in *Acts 2. 21.* *Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord* (that is daily, frequently, constantly, fervently and heartily) *shall be Saved.* But whosoever shall not thus call on the Name of the Lord shall never be saved.

Now in the next Place, I shall give you some Directions for the attaining of the Gift of Prayer, and also furnish you with Matter of Prayer, who are bare of Matter, as well for the help of those who are of a weak Capacity; and because I would omit nothing that might be for the Good of Souls, that may be a Means and a Way to help them to Heaven; I have now, through the Help of God, writ one Treatise more upon this Subject, to direct you how to attain to the Gift of Prayer, and supply you with Matter for Prayer, with some Directions for short Ejaculatory Prayer; and the Lord give you Understanding.

3 NO 63

The End of the First Part.

THE

T H H

Saint's Duty and Exercise :

Or, an Earnest



Invitation to the Throne of Grace.

The Second Part.

1 Thess. v. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

IN my First Part of [*The Saint's Duty and Exercise*] I shewed,

1st, What Prayer is,

2^{dly}, What it is to *Pray without ceasing.*

3^{dly}, I gave some Reasons why we should Pray without ceasing.

4^{thly} and lastly, I made some Application : Where,

1. I gave a Use of Lamentation.

2. An Use of Caution.

3. An Use of Exhortation. But,

Because this Duty of Prayer is of so great Consequence, that the right Performance of it shews a Man or Woman to be in a converted and renewed State, and in their
Way

Way to Heaven and Eternal Glory, but the Neglect of this great Duty, shews plainly, whatever they think of themselves, they are yet in their unconverted and unrenewed State, and so in the broad Way to Hell and Damnation; I shall therefore (by the Help of God) endeavour to do according as I promised in my first Book; that is to enlarge my Use for Exhortation.

1st, By shewing you how you shall attain unto the Gift of Prayer; and by what Means you may come to be furnished with Matter for Prayer, that are Barren of Matter.

2^{dly}, I shall give you some Directions concerning short Ejaculatory Prayer.

3^{dly}, If you are dead and dull, I shall in the last Place give you some Directions, how you may get your Hearts enlivened and quickened; and how you may come to be fervent and hearty in Prayer; and so I shall conclude this Subject.

I begin with the first of these:

There are a great many, that by means of long living in the Neglect of Prayer, they are such Strangers to this so great and necessary Duty, that when they come to fall upon their Knees before God, they are so dry and barren of Matter that they know not what to say in Prayer. Now if this be the Case of any that read this little Book (whoever you are) I desire you to take this Advice that I shall here give you; and then with your Endeavours and the Blessing of God with it, you will certainly attain to a most excellent Gift in Prayer.

Now in the First place, do as one of Christ's Disciples did, *John 11. 1.* who came to Christ,
and

and desired him to teach them to pray, even as John taught his Disciples : So go you to God in the Name of Christ, and desire him to teach you to pray; Say, *Lord teach me to pray.* Beg for God's Holy Spirit, that he would help you to pray, and assist you in Prayer, and put Words into your Mouth; for it is the Spirit that must help your Infirmities, saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 26.* *For we know not what to pray for as we ought: But the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with Groans that cannot be expressed.* And if you come with an earnest Desire of the Spirit's help, he will help and assist you. But this is not all; for there are other Means that you must use, if you desire to attain unto the Gift of Prayer.

First, you must labour to be well acquainted with your selves; study well your Hearts and Lives, and study truly the Word and Will of God, and all the Branches of the Ten Commandments; which you may do by the help of the *Assembly's Catechism*, or any other Book which explains the Ten Commandments: Study also the largeness of them, and then ransack your Heart and Life to find out what Sins and Corruptions lie lurking in your Heart; and what Sins are predominant and reigning in you; as Pride, Covetousness, Lustfulness, Sensuality, Envy, Anger, Malice, Self-love, &c. Now to know what your Inclinations are, and what Sins and Corruptions are reigning and predominant in you, you may know by the going out of your Heart after vain Things more than after God and Heavenly Things: As for Instance, if you love the World, or the Flesh, or your carnal Pleasure more than God, Christ, and heavenly Things; these Vanities you

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will

will take delight to roul your Thoughts most upon, and discourse more upon them, than upon *God, Christ, and Heavenly Things*. Examine also your Life; what Sins you have committed, and what Duties you have omitted: then examining your Weaknesses and Disorders, when you are at any Service of God, either at Church or about any holy Duty, either in publick or else in private; labour then to know how dead and dull you are apt to be, and how roving and wandering your Thoughts are apt to be. Now, if you will take this Course, to labour to know your selves, your Inclinations and Infirmities, you will then find such a Multitude of inward Corruptions to lament and bewail, such a Multitude of Actual Sins to confess, and such a Multitude of Wants to be supplied, and so many Weaknesses to be strengthened, so many Disorders to be rectified, and so many Sins to be forgiven, that you may find Work enough for Confessions and Complaints and Petitions for many Days together. Study also the meaning of the *Lord's Prayer*, and there you will find, how short you come of sanctifying of God's Name, and doing of his Will; and how far the Kingdom of Grace is from coming into your Souls, when as you experience the Kingdom of Sin and Satan to reign there so much.

Secondly, For the furnishing you with Matter for Prayer. In the next Place, study God and Christ, and labour to know him in his Nature, Attributes and Works; and especially labour to be acquainted with his Dealings towards you; and then you will see what a holy and righteous Law you break, what a God you have offended, even your Maker, Preserver, and Benefactor.

Then

Then study the Holiness and Purity of God, and then you will see what an Image you have defac'd and how you have vilifyed all the Graces of God's Spirit, which are contrary to Sin. Study also the Goodness of God, and then you will see what Mercies you have abused, what Grace and Love you have rejected : Study the Greatness of God, and then you will see what a Majesty you have affronted ; who, if he had been pleased, was able to snatch you away in a Moment, and fling you into everlasting Torments, as you have justly deserved. Once more, Study well the Truth and Faithfulness of God, and then you will see what Promises you have slighted, and what Threatnings you have contemned, and these Things will cause you to aggravate your Sins in confessing of them ; and they will melt you with a Multitude of Words in your aggravating your Sins ; and besides, they will furnish you to lament over them with a melting and a bleeding Heart ; and besides, they will make you the more earnest in begging Pardon for them, and to study God's great Goodness to you, and to think on the several kinds of his Mercy, which he has bestowed upon you, both for your Souls and Bodies : As for Instance, by what wonderful Mercy your Lives are preserved, and you saved from all Dangers, when as so many Distempers, and such a Multitude of Casualties might besal you, to deprive you of Life, yet God preserves you against all Casualties and Dangers. And to this end he renews his Mercy to you every Morning, and every Night, and every Hour ; he also by his good Hand of Providence, feeds you with the Fruits of the Earth, and gives it Verrue to

nourish you, and gives you an Appetite to digest 'em, also he continues your Ease, whilst many others are in Pain and Misery ; also he continues the Sight of your Eyes, and the Use of all your Senses and Members, and gives you sweet and comfortable Rest, and comfortable Habitations : And besides, the greatest Mercy of all is, you being in a lost and undone Estate and Condition, he delivered up his dearly beloved Son as a Sacrifice upon the Cross, that by his Sufferings and Death he might deliver us from Hell and Eternal Wrath, and purchase Heaven and Salvation for you ; and upon this Account, he hath given you the Light of his holy Word and Gospel ; he hath given you his Sabbath and his Ministers, and his holy Spirit to teach and instruct you in your Way to Heaven and Happiness. Now if you will but study all these sorts of Mercies, what abundance of Matter you will find for Praise and Thanksgiving ! Study also what Temptations you daily meet withal in the World ; what Snares, Baits, and Allurements you often meet with, prompting of you up to Pride, Lustfulness, Wantonness, Covetousness, Intemperance, Malice or Revenge ; and how apt you are to be overcome by these Temptations ; and then you will find Matter enough to Pray for Power and Strength against those Temptations, that you be not overcome : Study also, what Victory you have got over such and such a Lust, and then you will find Matter of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, for giving you that Victory, as the Apostle did, 1 Cor. 11. 14. Also you will find Matter to bewail and lament over those Sins and Corruptions, that you cannot yet find you have got any Victory against.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Study well the Fulness of Christ, and your own Emptiness, and this will furnish you with Matter of Prayer, Consider; that in Christ there is Fulness of all Grace, there is Power to repent of Sins past, there is Strength against Corruption, there is Power enabling the Sinner to lay hold on Christ by a saving Faith; there is the Grace of Divine Love, of holy Fear, of Patience, of Meekness, and of self denial: None of these Graces are implanted in Nature, but they are all purchased by the Blood of Christ, and they are all hid in Christ, to be bestowed upon all such as earnestly desire them, and seek and labour by hearty fervent Prayer for the obtaining of them. *Col. 1. 19. For it pleaseth the Father, (saith the Apostle) that in him should all Fulness dwell.* So in *John 1. 16. For of his Fulness all have received Grace for Grace.* Friends, if you did but once come to see the Fulness of Christ, and your own Emptiness, you would never cease crying unto him, until your Souls are replenished with those saving Graces which are purchased for lost Sinners, and laid up in Christ: You know, that a Child when he sees a Pedlar's Pack opened, and seeing so many things, he will cry to his Father, *Father, give me this or that*: So would you cry to God, your heavenly Father, for such and such saving Graces, if you did but once come to see the Riches of Christ, and your own Wants and Necessities.

Fourthly, Observe how the Case goes with the Church and People of God, and how the Case goes with your Neighbours and relations, and with the Family in which you dwell, both in respect of their Bodies and of their Souls: and this will furnish you with Matter for Prayer and Intercession.

Fifthly, Join as oft as you can with praying Persons, and of them you may learn to pray.

Sixthly and *Lastly*, For your help, get by heart some Forms of Prayer (out of a Book) and make use of them ; until by them you come to know your own Sins and Wants ; and so can pray better without them. But I need not send you to a Prayer-book to learn to pray ; do but study and consider well upon what I have here wrote in this small Book, and follow this Rule ; namely, study well your Sins, Corruptions, and Temptations, your Wants, and your daily Mercies ; and then you shall be furnished with Matter enough for Prayer.

Thus I have finished the first Thing I promised ; that is, to shew you how you shall attain unto a Gift of Prayer ; and furnish you with Matter, who are weak and barren of Matter.

I shall be brief in the other two.

Secondly, I promised also to give you some Directions concerning short Ejaculatory Prayer : And this is a sudden lifting up of the Heart to God in some short Phrase, which may be done at any Time, at any Place or Company ; especially when you are alone, when you are at your Work, or when you are a Walking or Travelling by the Way ; then you may often lift up your Heart to God in some short Prayer, and yet no hindrance to you in what you are about ; and besides, you may meet with some Casualties, or some Temptations, or some Motions may come into your Mind, to move you to some short Breathing forth of your Soul to God : And, as occasion serves, learn to plead with God, and plead his Attributes thus :

First,

First, When you chance to meet with any Tempting or Insuaring Object, that you are afraid of being caught in the Devil's Hooks, then plead God's Omnilciency thus :

O most Wise, Omnipotent, All-seeing, and All-knowing God, from whom no secret thing can be hid: who markest all my Steps, and understandest my thoughts afar off: I pray thee give me Graces, that I may set thee always before mine Eyes, and be ever mindful of my Appearance at the Bar of thy Justice, that I may not dare to venture upon that Sin that I am now tempted to.

Secondly, If you find any Sin or Lust like to overcome you, then plead God's Power and All-sufficiency thus :

O Almighty, Great, and Glorious Lord God, whose Strength is made perfect in Weakness, I pray thee according to thy Almighty Power, strengthen me with thy Grace, that I may by thy Help, be enabled to overcome this Sin, this Lust, this Vanity.

Thirdly, If for want of taking heed, you chance to be overtaken, and fall into any kind of Sin, then plead the Mercy and Goodness of God, and the Merits of Christ, for your Pardon thus :

O most Merciful, Gracious and Loving Father, in Christ I humbly intreat thee, for his bitter Death, and bloody Passion's sake, that thou wouldst pardon and forgive me this Sin, and give me Grace to rise again by true Repentance, and be more watchful over my Heart and Life for the time to come.

Whensoever you think upon your natural Pollutions and Defilements, then plead the Holiness of God, thus :

O most Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbath, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity with

Allowance ; I pray he wash away my Sins in the Blood of Jesus Christ : Sanctifie my vile Nature : Purifie my Conscience from Dead Works.

But to be short, if you are under any Doubts or Fears, or under any kind of Affliction, then plead the Wisdom of God, that he might work all things about for your good.

Also when you are a going to read or hear the Word of God, then plead God's Truth and Faithfulness, that for his Truth's sake, he would give you Grace to hearken to his Counsels, obey his Precepts, imbrace his Promises, and stand in awe of his Threatnings.

Lastly, Once more, when you are going about the set Duty of Prayer, and finding your self to be dull and unfit for that Duty, then plead the quickening Spirit of God, thus :

O Infinite, Eternal and Everlasting God, who art Life it self, and givest Life and Being to all Creatures ; and by the Virtue of Christ's Resurrection, will one Day raise the Dead out of their Graves, I beseech thee also by the same Virtue, that thou wouldst quicken my dead and dull Spirit : Suffer me not to bring a dead Sacrifice before a living God ; but take from me Deadness, Dulness, and Drowsiness, or whatsoever hinders or indisposeth me to Duty. Quicken me, I pray thee to Duty, and quicken me in Duty ; inspire in me, I beseech thee, a new Spiritual Life ; and this I beg for Christ's sake.

Thus I have endeavour'd, as plain as I could, to put Words into your Mouths, and teach you how to pray, both by a set Duty and by short Ejaculations. The third and last thing I promised, is to give some Directions, how to obtain

tain Life and Fervency in Prayer. Now that you may get this, take with you these few Rules :

First, Take heed of Praying in a formal Customary Manner ; for if you do not feel Sin to be a Burthen to you, (if you have not a sensible feeling of your Wants, and a longing Desire after those Graces you pray for) then whilst the Tongue goes, your Heart is apt to take its Ease ; and then what a poor lifeless thing will Prayer be ?

Secondly, Clog not the Body with too much Eating and Drinking, nor too much tired Labour ; for the holiest Person living will have but little Fervency of Mind in Prayer, if he comes to it with a dull, full or wearied Body.

Thirdly, Rush not suddenly upon Prayer, out of a Crowd of other Business ; for that Work cannot be well done, that is done with a Mind busied about other Matters.

Fourthly, Take more Pains with your Heart than with your Tongue, that they may be kept awake in Prayer.

Fifthly, Consider well the Worth of those things you pray for ; if you prevail not for Grace, Pardon and Mercy, you are undone for ever.

Sixthly, Pray as if you saw the great and terrible Majesty of Heaven, and all his glorious Angels stand by you. These you may see by an Eye of Faith, though not by an Eye of Sense : And God knows what Frame your Hearts are in, whilst you are praying, though you see him not.

Seventhly, and *Lastly*, To conclude all, when you are going to pray, labour to stir up your

Souls into a lively and serious Belief of the unseen Things of another World : And pray as if you saw them before your Eyes ; as if you saw God in his Glory ; as if you saw Heaven and Hell ; the Glorified and the Damned ; Christ in Heaven interceding for you. Such a believing Sight as this will make you serious, and pray to purpose with all your Hearts. Thus by following of these Rules, you will, by God's Help, obtain a Fervency in Prayer.

Now consider these things, and the Lord give you Understanding.

3 NO 63

The End of the Second Part.

T H B

T H E
 Accepted Time,
 A N D
 Day of Salvation, &c.



2 Cor. VI. part of Verse ii.

— *Behold now is the Accepted Time: behold now is the Day of Salvation.*

THe Occasion of these Words may be taken from the Words immediately before the Text, which were the Lord's own Words spoken by the Mouth of the Prophet *Isaiah*, 49. 8. saying, *I have heard thee in a Time accepted, and in a Day of Salvation have succoured thee: Or as it is in the Words before the Text, In a Day of Salvation have I succoured thee.* And from thence the Apostle takes occasion to shew them when that *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation is*, wherein God hears us and accepts us; and that he doth here in the Words of my Text, *Behold, now is the accepted Time; behold, now is the Day of Salvation.*

From these Words I shall gather this general Observation:

That the only Time to make our Peace with God, and thereby to obtain Mercy and Sal-
 vation

vation is now, this present Season of Grace ; or the Time present is the only Acceptable Time : For, *Behold, now is the Accepted Time ; behold, now is the Day of Salvation.*

The Text affords us these two general Parts :

First, Here is a double Note of Attention : *Behold ! Behold !*

Secondly, Here is the Subject matter to *Behold* ; that is, *Now is the Accepted Time*, and, *now is the Day of Salvation.*

First, Here is a double Note of Attention ; *Behold ! Behold !* Now to behold a thing, is to take great Notice of it, to observe it, and to mind it, and we may be sure that whensoever we are called upon to behold a thing, it must be something of very great Concern ; there are many things that are not worth beholding ; for if you mind it you may find in the Scriptures, that when any thing is mentioned that is of greater Concernment than others, it is always brought in with this Note, *Behold !* As *James 3. 12. Behold and See, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow.* A Matter of very great Concernment. So *John 1. 20. Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World ;* and many other. Now there cannot be a Matter of greater Concernment than this in my Text, That *now is the Accepted Time, and now is the Day of Salvation.* A thing which concerns our winning or losing of Heaven for ever ; a thing which concerns our everlasting Peace, or our everlasting Woe ; that now is the time that if we in earnest seek for Mercy, we may have it : *Now is the time*, that if we seek and desire Grace, Pardon, and Salvation, we shall be accepted ; But afterwards all our Praying, Crying, and Intreat-

ing,

ing, will be in vain : Now what can be more worth our beholding than this ? This is a Matter which concerns our selves, and it is of the greatest Concernment in the World, therefore this requires a double Note of Attention, to put us in mind of it ; *Behold ! Behold !*

And so I pass, *Secondly*, from the Note *Behold* to the Second General Head, Subject matter to *Behold* ; and that also is double : *Behold now is the Accepted Time : Behold, now is the Day of Salvation.* Now tho' the *Accepted Time*, and the *Day of Salvation*, are two several Words, yet in Sense they are one and the same : For the *Accepted Time* is our *Day of Salvation*, and our *Day of Salvation* is the *Accepted Time* ; wherein, if we unfeignedly seek the Lord, and turn to him by true Repentance, we shall be sure to be accepted, pardoned and saved : For, *Behold, now is the Accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.*

Now, in my further prosecution of this Subject, I shall proceed after this manner :

First, I shall shew you, that with us there is such a Time as an *Accepted Time*, and *Day of Salvation*.

Secondly, I shall shew you the Season when this *Accepted Time*, and *Day of Salvation* is.

Thirdly, The Reason of it. And,

Lastly, The Application.

I shall begin with the *First* and shew you, That with us there is such a Time and Day of Salvation : And that, *First*, in respect of the fallen Angels, who never had such a Season allotted them : Alas ; they committed but one Sin against God, and that but only in Thought, and yet for that one Sin they were thrust out of Heaven, and reserved

ved unto Chains of Darkneſs, unto the dreadful Judgment of the great Day ; they being once fallen, had never a Day of Salvation afforded them, they never had one moment of Time allotted them, upon the Improvement of which, they might have been reſerved to Mercy : Therefore if they ſhould pray and cry, and intreat the Lord never ſo earneſtly, that he would forgive them that one Sin, and reſtore them once more to Mercy, yet they ſhall never be regarded : Chriſt ſuffered not for them, there was not one Drop of Blood ſhed to waſh away their Sins : *For he took not upon him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham,* Heb. 6. 16.

Secondly, There is with us ſuch a Time as an *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation*, in oppoſition to thoſe damned Souls that are already in Hell : 'Tis true, the Devils being once fallen, never had Mercy offered them, they never had one Minute of Time afforded them to work out their Salvation, whereas theſe damned Wretches once had Mercy offered them, but they deſpiſed it ; they once had a *Day of Salvation*, a Time wherein they might have been *Accepted* : Alas ! They had many a Call from God, Time after Time, many a ſecret Motion from his Spirit ; they once heard many a Sermon, and enjoyed many a Sabbath, many an Ordinance ; God waited upon them Time after Time, Year after Year, whiſt they continued in their Rebellion againſt him : But alas ! alas ! they ſinned away all their precious Opportunities ! all this Time they might have been *Accepted* if they had returned to God in earneſt : But lo ! Now the Day of Grace is concluded, the Door of Hope is for ever ſhut againſt them ; now they are left

left in a far more miserable Condition than the fallen Angels are in; for they once had a Golden Season of Grace put into their Hands, but they wilfully lost it, and triff'd it away; long did God wait and call upon them from one time to another, by his Spirit, and by his Messengers; but they wearied out his Patience, grieved his Spirit, despised his Messengers, abused all his Goodness: Alas! the Devils will never have such Considerations as these to torment them, as these damned Soul now have.

Thirdly, There is with us such a Time as an *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation*, in Opposition to what shall be with us hereafter; if we let it slip when we come to Hell, we shall be in the same miserable Condition that those damned Souls are in, that are already there: Consider, that Man being created in a holy and righteous Estate, and we being fallen, if God had not found out a Way for our Recovery, we had been left in as miserable a Condition as the lost Angels were: but God of his unspeakable Mercy, looked in tender Love upon lost Mankind, that he gave his dearly beloved Son to suffer and die for us; and for his sake he hath afforded every one of us a Day of Grace, which if we duly improve in turning to God, in receiving of this his Son, as he is offered, we shall be accepted, pardoned and saved; but if you squander away this precious Season, in following Vanity and Foolery, in satisfying our Lusts, and pleasing our selves until the Door of Mercy be shut, our Damnation will be far more great, than if we never had had such an Opportunity put into our Hands: That's the *First*, there is with us such a Time as an *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation*.

Secondly, I shall next shew, when this *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation* is; that is, it is now; *Now is the Accepted Time, and now is the Day of Salvation.* The Apostle doth not speak it in the Future Tense, that soon after will be an *Accepted Time*, tho' you continue in your Sins for a while in rebelling against God, grieving of his Spirit; and provoking him to Wrath; yet if you turn to God hereafter, you shall be accepted; no, but he speaks in the present Tense, *Behold now is the Accepted Time*; now is the Opportunity of Grace put into your Hands, wherein Heaven is to be won or lost for ever; and according as you improve this present Season of Grace, so must your everlasting Estate be in another World: All Mankind are in a miserable State by Nature; and it is now that the Terms of Mercy are offered you, and an Opportunity of Grace put into your Hand. O! for the Lord's sake, do not ruin your Souls for ever, by neglecting so precious an Opportunity: Mark what our Saviour saith, *Mat. 21. 26. Agree now with thy Adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the Way with him, lest at any time the Adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast into Prison: Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the utmost Farthing.* Now God is your Adversary, for we are all by Nature Enemies to God by reason of Sin; but yet God, of his tender Love, hath given us Terms of Reconciliation; agree therefore with him quickly, before his Justice hath seized upon thee, and thou be delivered to the Officer, the Devil, and then thou shalt by him be cast into the Prison of Hell, and there thou must lie in extream and intolerable Torments

until thou hast paid the utmost Farthing of God's Justice, which can never be to all Eternity ! O ! therefore agree and make your Peace with your God quickly, whilst thou art in the Way with him ; for now you are in a fair Way with him to be reconciled, for he offers you Terms of Mercy : he hath shewed you in his Word by what Means you may come to make an Agreement with him ; he calls upon you by his Messengers ; he entreats you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to him, 2 Cor. 20. And if God so earnestly desire our Reconciliation with him, in what a fair Way are we then with God to be reconciled ? But continue in your unconverted Estate, and in your Enmity against God a little longer, until the Season of Grace be at an end, and God hath shut against you the Door of Mercy, then God and you will be unreconcilable for ever ; then all your Prayers and Tears, and Endeavours, shall never be accepted ; then nothing remains, but to the Prison of Hell you must be cast, there to remain for ever and ever : Therefore, as *Eliphaz* said to *Job*, so say I to you, *Job* 22. 21. *Acquaint now thy self with him and be at Peace, thereby Good shall come unto thee* : For, behold now is the time that thou mayest be accepted : But more particular, to shew you when this *Accepted Time, and Day of Salvation* is ; it is now in this Life, for there is no making our Peace with God after Death ; therefore saith *Solomon*, *Eccles.* 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might ; for there is no Work nor Device, no Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest.*

Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, whether it be to repent, to close lovingly with Christ to get
Grace

Grace, or to strengthen thy Grace, or to secure thy Title towards Heaven: O! set about it with all thy Might and Main, for there is none of this to be done in the Grave, whither we are all hastening; then praying Opportunities, Sermon Opportunities, Sacrament Opportunities, Sabbath-Opportunities will be at an end; Now, if yet you are in your unconverted Estate, and yet under the Wrath of God, now, through God's Grace you may be converted: if yet you are Enemies to God, you may be reconciled; if yet you are in your Sins, you may be pardoned; if yet you are in the Estate of Damnation, you may be brought into an Estate of Salvation: But when once Death hath shut your Eyes, then your Condition will be unalterable for ever, *I must work the work of him that sent me, whilst it is Day; for the Night cometh, when no Man can work.*

But yet though the Time of this Life be the *Accepted Time* and *Day of Salvation*, yet every Time of a Man's Life may not be an *Accepted Time* with him; for with some Men, the *Day of Salvation* lasteth all their Life long, and with some it doth not: Therefore well may the Prophet cry out, *Isa. 55. 7. Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found; call upon him whilst he is near:* for there may come a time, even in the time of this Life, that the Lord will not be found, though he be sought never so diligently: And *Esau*, because he neglected the Season of his Repentance, he afterwards sought Repentance carefully with Tears, even long before the Day of his Death, but he could not find it, *Heb. 12. 17.*

'Tis true, as long as there is Life there is Hope; there is Hope so long as a Man on this side Hell; and

and the time of Life is commonly called the Day of Grace ; nor, because the Day of Grace continues all a Man's Life Long, but because it is bounded within the Compass of a Man's Life : Now, because every time of a Man's Life may not be an *Accepted Time*, I shall therefore shew you some certain Seasons of a Man's Life, which if he have but Wisdom to know them, and Grace to improve them, he shall be sure to be accepted : I shall but little more than name them.

First, The Time of youth is the *Accepted Time* ! Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, says Solomon, Eccles. 12. 1. O Friends ! if you turn to God, and in the time close with Christ, and seek for Pardon and Mercy, now whilst you are Young, you shall surely be accepted, For saith God to his People *Israel*, Jer. 2. *I have expected the Kindness of thy youth.* Some young People I have sometimes looked upon as the happiest People in the World, because we may be sure their Season of Grace is not gone; the present Time is the *Day of Salvation*, the Lord give them Grace to improve it : To see young Boys and Girls give themselves to studying of the Scripture, to praying and crying after Christ, Grace and Mercy : Oh ! it is the rarest Sight in the World : Whoever the Door of Mercy is shut against, it shall certainly be open to them.

Secondly, The Time of Health and Strength is the *Accepted Time* : In the Old Law, that which was offered up in Sacrifice, which was torn, blind, or lame, was not accepted : This shews, that those who spend the best of their Days and Strength in the Work of the Devil, and then think to give up themselves to God, when Sickness, Lame-

ness.

ness and feeble old Age comes, must never look to be accepted, God will not be turned off with the Devil's Leavings.

Thirdly. The Time of the Gospel is the *Accepted Time*. Praying Opportunities, Sermon Opportunities, Sacrament Opportunities, Sabbath Opportunities; these are Seasons of Salvation, for we know not how soon God may remove our Candlestick out of his Place, and take from us the Means of Grace; and then the Opportunities of Grace will soon be at an end.

Fourthly and Lastly, The Time of God's Spirit's working and striving in the Heart of wicked Men, is the *Accepted Time*; and they that obey the Calls of God's Spirit when it strives, shall be sure to be accepted, let it be at what time soever, whether it be in Youth or Old-Age; though the Spirit hath it's Goings and Comings, yet some it doth not give over to their Old-Age, or to their Dying-day; and some it doth: God's Spirit is compared to Noah's Dove, which Noah sent out of the Ark, and it returned to him again; and then again: But when he sent the Dove out the third time, the Dove never returned to him more. So the Spirit of God hath it's Goings and Comings; it comes at one time into the Heart of a Sinner, and secretly calls upon him to repent, and become a new Creature: But this Sinner, may be, stifles these good Motions, quenches the Spirit, and continues still in his sinful Course of Life, then it may be, the Spirit departs, and after a while comes again, and finding the Sinner the same still, he departs, and then comes again and again, and at last the Spirit being often resisted, and grieved, he is provoked finally to depart and never to trouble,

ble him more ; and then Grace is departed, and he is immediately deliver'd up to a hard Heart and a reprobate Mind, that shall never repent. And when once he is brought to that pass, then all the Sermons and all the Prayers in the World will never do him any good. O therefore have a care of quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit of God when it secretly stirs and works in your Hearts ! but be careful to obey its Motions, lest the Spirit being grieved, withdraw its self finally, and never return more ; and then your *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation* will be at an end. Now consider all this, if you are yet in your Youth and Strength, and enjoy the Ordinances of God, and the Means of Grace, and the secret Operation of God's Spirit ; and then behold, and again Behold, *that now is the Accepted Time, and now is the Day of Salvation.* Now with us there is such a Time as an *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation* ; and that for these two Reasons. I shall but just name them :

First. That thereby the Saints might have occasion for ever to magnifie the free Grace of God, that he hath not left them to perish in their miserable Estate, but hath offered them Terms of Mercy, and hath put an Opportunity of Salvation into their Hands, and hath given them Grace to improve it.

Secondly, That thereby the Wicked may be left without excuse, for there is never a damn'd Soul in Hell that can plead this, That they never had a Day of Grace : O it would be a great lessening of their Torments if they could plead so. Alas ! there was never a Man or Woman, since the Creation of the World, but hath had a season of Grace :

Grace ; there was never none yet ever lived, be their Lives short or long, but before they die, they have Mercy offered them, and an acceptable Time to seek it in ; Therefore the Wicked shall be left without Excuse ; nay, 'twill add much to their Torments to consider, that they once had a Season of Grace and Salvation, and yet wilfully lost it. O let every one therefore, both small and great, behold and consider, *That now is the Accepted Time, and now is the Day of Salvation.*

The APPLICATION.

THe first Use that I shall make of this, shall be a Use of Terror, to all such as squander and trifle away the precious Season of Grace and Salvation : Friends you have heard, that God's Spirit will not always strive with Men : God is not bound to wait all a Man's Life long ; if God continue waiting from one Time to another, from one Year to another, from one Sabbath to another, and yet you turn a deaf Ear to his Calls, and slight all his Warnings, and will go on resolutely, and presumptuously in your Sins ; consider, God will at last be weary of waiting, his waiting will be tired out ; and then, just as you have served God in your Day of Grace, so God will serve you when his Day of Wrath and Vengeance comes : O read and tremble, in that dreadful Place of Scripture, *Prov. 1. 2.* to the end : Mark there how lovingly God expostulates with wicked Men, saying, *How long, you simple Ones, will you love Simplicity ? and you Scorners delight in Scorning ? and ye Fools hate Knowledge ?* And then see his loving Call and Invitation,, *Ver. 23.* Turn you at my Reproof :

proof: Also his gracious Promise, *Behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you ; I will make known my Word unto you.* But yet all this loving Expostulation, Invitation and Promise would prevail nothing with them, they would run on in their evil Courses for all that ; therefore see what God saith to them now, Ver. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded : but ye have set at naught all my Counsels, and would none of my Reproof ; I also will laugh at your Calamity, and will mock when your Fear cometh ; when Fear cometh as a Whirl-wind, when Destruction and Anguish cometh upon them, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; then shall they seek me early, but they shall not find me, in that they hated Knowledge, and did not chuse the Fear of the Lord.* A most dreadful Text this is, if it be rightly considered ; in the Day of their Visitation, God called upon them to turn from their evil Ways, and then they turned a deaf Ear, and would not regard ; but afterwards, when their Day of Grace was past, and the Day of their Extremity was come ; then they called upon God for Mercy, and God would not regard them. It is a common Proverb amongst us,

*He that will not whilst he may,
When he would he shall have nay.*

This was the very Case of *Esau*, he was a Hunting and following his fleshly Delight, when God was a calling him to Repentance ; and then afterwards when he would have repented, he was rejected ; for he found no Place for Repentance, tho' he sought it carefully with Tears, *Heb. 12. 27.* Now God may call long upon wicked Men to turn, and be saved, both by his Word and by his Spi-

Spirit, but they will not regard ; but when this their Day of Salvation is ended, and they come to lie upon their Death-beds, O ! how they will then cry out, *Lord, pardon me ; Lord save me ; Mercy, Lord ; Mercy Lord ; some Mercy, for Christ's sake :* But God may justly answer them ; *No Sinner, no Mercy to be had ; I once offered thee Mercy, but thou abusedst it ; and seeing thou wouldst not accept of Mercy whilst it is offer'd thee, therefore now the Door of Mercy is shut against thee for ever.*

Secondly, My second Use shall be for Matter of Encouragement, to such who are willing to come in and accept of the Terms of Mercy, but yet keep off through many Doubts and Fears.

O, says one, *I am afraid my Day of Salvation is past already ; and if so, all my Endeavours will be in vain : do what I can, I shall never be accepted.*

Ans. To answer this, I will give you this one Mark, whereby you may know whether your Day of Salvation be past or no ; You say, you are afraid that your Day of Salvation is past ; if so, that is a good Sign that it is not past ; for those with whom their Day of Grace is past, they grow senseless of any such Matter. Again, Don't you find sometimes godly Motions stirring in you by the Spirit ? Don't you find in you sometimes a Sorrow for Sin, after it is committed ; and a Desire to leave Sin ? Doth not your Heart sometimes melt, when you hear the Word preached ? Have you not some Desire to become a new Creature ? If so, then your Day of Salvation is not yet past ; for those with whom the Day of Grace is past, they are given over to a senseless, hard, and obdurate Heart, that is neither moved with Mercies, nor terrified with Judgments ; and being given

given over to themselves, they run into all kind of Wickedness with greediness; and, as it seems, this is not thy Case, as yet; so now, up, and close with the Terms of Mercy, whilst thy Day of Salvation is lengthned out.

O but, saith another, it may be, I am none of God's Elect; and, if so, then all my Endeavours will be to no purpose.

Ans. Whether a Man be elected or not, that is not in his Power to know, and therefore he ought not to meddle with it; but you must understand, that God decrees aright, for those whom he hath elected, he hath absolutely decreed, that they shall be justified, sanctified, and saved; but those whom God hath reprobated, he hath not absolutely decreed that they shall be damned, but hath left them to their own Choice, as *Adam* and *Eve* was; and therefore their Damnation is wilful of themselves; but whether you are elected or not, if I may so speak, if you repent, and be converted, you shall be saved; if not, you shall be damned: As many as do perish, do not perish because they were not elected, but because they would not use the Means in order to their Salvation.

O but, you will say, it may be, God will not give me Grace to repent, and without his Grace I can do nothing.

Answer. Know, for your Encouragement, that both you and every one else, enjoys a Day of Salvation; and this Day of Salvation is a Time of Assistance, as well as a Time of Acceptance: Mark the Promise of Christ, *Mat. 7. 7. Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh,*
E
receiveth;

receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Mark, Christ speaks there nothing concerning Election, but every one, whoever he be that asketh, seeketh, and knocketh for Grace, Pardon and Mercy, and that in Season, whilst it may be had, shall certainly be heard and accepted : But then you must be sure to seek in Season, for seeking out of Season, never yet found Success. Now if *Esau* had but sought Repentance in earnest when God called him to repent, then God would have strengthened and assisted him, and also accepted him ; but he sought for Repentance when the Season of Repentance was gone, and that ruined him for ever. Now mark this, whatever the Decrees of Heaven be concerning you, yet if you are but willing to leave your Sins, and do heartily desire Grace and Mercy, and earnestly seek it by Prayer and Supplication, and that in the Season of Grace, whilst it is offered you ; then, tho' you can do nothing of your selves, yet you shall have Strength and Assistance enough ; for God will help you, Christ will help you, and the Spirit will help you ; you shall have help from Heaven ; and, through the Spirit of Christ's strengthening, you shall be enabled to go through with this great Work, and then you shall not only be assisted, but also accepted and rewarded : But then you must be sure to seek in Season, in your Day of Salvation ; for if you seek out of Season, all your seeking and striving will be in vain.

Lastly, To conclude all with a Word or two of Exhortation : Be exhorted, as you desire the Salvation of your Souls, to consider and improve this precious Season of Grace and Salvation, in
work-

working out your Salvation, before it be too late: O it is most dreadful to consider, that God hath allotted us but one small Portion of Time, to do all that ever must be done for Eternity, and yet it should be squandered away in Vanity and Foolery: But Friends, whatever you see others do, do you in earnest lay hold on this your Day of Salvation before it is gone: *Seek ye the Lord now whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near.* And, whilst others spend their precious Time in Feasting, Rioting, and in the Pleasures of the Flesh, do you spend your Time in Fasting, Praying, Repenting, and Suing out the Pardon of your Sins, and making your Peace with God. And, if you thus do, then at last, when Time shall cease, and be no longer, you shall hear that Blessed Welcome proceed from the Mouth of Christ, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, enter into the Joy of thy Lord.* Which the Lord of his infinite Mercy grant unto us all. *Amen.*

The End of the Third **SERMON.**

E 2

THE

THE
End of TIME,
AND
Beginning of ETERNITY.

Rev. X. Ver. v. and part of Ver. vi. . . .

*And the Angel which I saw stand upon the Earth,
and upon the Sea, lift up his Hand towards Hea-
ven,*

*And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, &c.
That there should be Time no longer.*

Beloved Friends and Neighbours, I desire you all to take this small Treatise into your Hands, and diligently read it over and over again; and when you have done, enter upon a serious Consideration upon those Matters which are contained in this Book, and lay them close to your Hearts; and I hope it will be a Means to stir you up in time, to lay hold on this your golden Season of Grace, before it be at an end.

In my last Treatise, concerning the *Accepted Time and Day of Salvation*, I was forced to leave out many Things that are of very great Weight and Concernment, because they could not be all

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contained in so small a Discourse : And it is great pity, that such weighty Matters should be lost ; and therefore upon farther Consideration of it, I have here entred upon another Subject, which is, concerning *The End of Time, and Beginning of Eternity* : wherein I do propose, thro' God's Assistance, to lay down those weighty Concerns which I was forced to leave out in my other Treatise of *The Accepted Time and Day of Salvation* : And, I hope, thro' God's Grace, it will be an Occasion of winning many Souls, and bringing them home to God, who now squander and trifle away their Time in meer Vanity ; and that I shall do from these Words of the Angel, who swearing with a loud Voice, *By Him that liveth for ever and ever, That there should be Time no longer.*

Now from this Place of Scripture I might lay down these Particulars :

I. The Description of the Person, that thus swears, *It was a great and mighty Angel came down from Heaven,* Ver. 1.

II. What it was he held in his Hand : It was a little Book open.

III. His Gesture : He stood.

IV. His Manner of Standing : It was with one Foot upon the Earth, and the other upon the Sea.

V. The Loudness of his Voice : It was as loud as when a Lyon roareth,

VI. As he spake : He lift up his Hand towards Heaven.

VII. He spoke with an Oath : He Swear.

VIII. The Person by whom he Swears, that is, *By him that liveth for ever and ever.*

IX. And lastly, The Matter of his Oath, or

the Words which he uttered ; that is, *That there should be Time no longer.*

But I will pass them all by, and insist only upon the last, which are the Words that this great and mighty Angel uttered, and confirmed by an Oath, and swears by no less than the great and glorious God, by *Him that liveth for ever and ever* : And spake them with an exceeding loud Voice ; the Words were these, *That there should be Time no longer.*

The Doctrine that I shall raise from hence, is this : That at the End of this World, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment, Time and Opportunity shall cease and be no longer.

From hence I shall lay down these Three or Four Things considerable :

1. What Time should be no longer.
2. When Time should be no longer.
3. The Reason why Time should be no longer.

And then, *lastly*, The Application.

In the first Place, I shall shew you what Time shall be no longer : And in doing of this, I shall answer an Objection which lies in my Way ; that is, How that can be, some may say, that at the last Day, Time shall cease, and be no longer ? whereas it is said, That then nothing shall remain but Time, and that Time shall wait upon Eternity : When all Things in this World shall have an End, yet Time shall remain still, and ever shall remain ; it is as impossible to put an End to Time, as it is to put an End to God Himself : Time runs parallel with the Life of God, it never had Beginning, and never shall have End ; Time and Eternity are linked together, so that we cannot speak of the one, but we must speak of the other ;

Time

Time was before all Millions of Years that can be thought ; and it shall remain throughout all Ages to come, even to all Eternity.

Now to answer this, When the Angel swears, that Time should be no longer, he doth not mean Time considered in it self ; for that shall remain as long as Eternity endures, and shall never have an End ; And for Time to have an End, is a Thing impossible : But to take the Words in their true Sense and Meaning, it is the Opportunity of Time, which at the last Day shall cease and be no longer.

I shall name some of those Opportunities of Time, which at the End of the World shall end and be no longer.

I. The Time of Nature shall be no longer. It was the Promise of God to Man, after the Flood, Gen. 8. 22. *That as long as the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.* But at the End of the World, when the Earth, and all Things Temporal, shall be dissolved, then all these shall cease and be no longer : *To every thing, saith Solomon, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun, Eccles. 3. 1. 2, 3, &c. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted, &c.*

But at the End of the World, all these Seasons and Opportunities shall end and be no longer : then there shall be no more Opportunities of Planting nor Gathering, no more Sowing nor Reaping, no more Opportunities of Buying and Selling, all these Opportunities of Nature shall then cease and be no longer.

II. The Time of our Abode here upon Earth shall

shall be no longer ; at the End of the World, Heaven and Hell shall contain the whole World of Men and Women ; either in Heaven or Hell we must abide for ever, but here upon Earth we shall be no more.

David prays, that God would spare him, that he may recover his strength before he goes hence, and be no more, Psalm 39. 13. That is, be no more in a mortal Estate in this World. And, Job 7. 9, 10. As the clouds consumeth and vanish away, so he that goeth down to the grave, shall come up no more ; he shall return no more to his house : That is, his Habitation in this World, and his Place here upon Earth, shall know him no more. So also Job 14. 12. If a man die, shall he live again ? That is, he shall live again in another World, either in everlasting Joys, or in everlasting Torments, but he shall live again no more in this World.

III. The Time of the Tribulations, Sorrows, and Afflictions of Gods Children shall be no longer : Now they are persecuted by wicked Men : now they are slighted, mocked at, scorned, and abused ; now they have many a Temptation to strive against ; now the Devil torments them with many Doubts and Fears that their Sins shall never be pardoned, that God will never more be favourable unto them : Alas ! they are now fain to endure many Sorrows and Calamities, both outwardly in their Bodies, and inwardly in their Souls.

But at the end of Time, there shall also be an End of all their Sorrows : Then God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are past away, Rev. 21. 4. Then they shall never
more

more be persecuted by wicked Men, they shall never more be subject to any Sickness, or Distempers, or any kind of Miseries; then there shall be no more complaining by reason of their outward Miseries; nor yet by reason of their inward Troubles: saying, Can these Sins be pardoned? Is there any Mercy for such a Wretch as I am? will God ever shew me any Favour? No, there shall be none of these Complaints heard in Heaven: For when Time shall be no longer, then all the Sorrows, Miseries and Afflictions of the Children of God shall also cease, and be no longer.

IV. The Time of the Prosperity and sinful Picares of wicked Men, shall be no longer; now wicked Men live many a merry Hour, they run to many a merry Meeting; now they can Laugh, and Sing, and Riot, and play away their precious Time; now they Feast, and Drink, and Game, as if they were to live for ever; but when Time shall end, and be no longer, then there shall be an end of all their Mirth and Jollity. Look in *Rev. 18.* and read that Chapter throughout, and there you shall see a dreadful Sentence pronounced against the Whore of Babylon; *She exceeded in riches, she was array'd in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; and she was full of her abominations and filthiness of her fornication, Chap. 17. 4.* She lived in all kind of Pleasure; but here is a dreadful Woe pronounced against her, *Chap. 18. 17.* *Look how much she hath glorified her self, and lived deliciously; so much torment and sorrow give her; for she said in her heart, I sit as queen, and shall know no sorrow. Therefore shall her Plagues come in one Day, Death And Mourning, and she shall be utterly burnt with Fire; for*

strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And after that, Ver. 21, 22, 23. *A mighty Angel took up a stone, like unto a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, shall be heard no more at all in thee.* This is the very Case of all wicked Men, they have their Pleasures and Delights upon Earth, Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for the misery that shall come upon you; (saith St. James, Chap. 5. v. 5.) *ye have lived in pleasure, and have been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.* But when Time shall be no longer, then there shall be an End of all their Mirth and Jollitry, then there shall be no more Mirth nor Jollitry, no more Singing and Rejoycing, no more Feasting and Drinking, no more Playing and Gaming, no more Musick nor Dancing; all these Pleasures, and fleshly Delights shall then have an End, and be no longer.

V. The Time of the Gospel shall be no longer; now we enjoy many a Praying-Opportunity, many a Sermon Opportunity, many a Sabbath-Opportunity, many a Sacrament-Opportunity, but at the End of Time, all these Opportunities shall be enjoy'd no more; then there shall be no more Preaching, nor Praying, no more Sabbaths, nor Sacraments, no more Gospel-Opportunities, and
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Enjoyments, no more Promises of Pardon and Mercy to Sinners, no more Offers of Christ and Salvation; all these Gospel-Opportunities shall then cease and be no longer.

VI. *And Lastly,* The Time of God's Patience and Forbearance shall be no longer; God hath resolved that his Spirit shall not always strive with Man: And, saith God to his People Israel, *Rom. 10. 21. All the day long have I stretched out my hand unto a disobedient and gain-saying people.* Now God stands Day after Day, Sabbath after Sabbath, Year after Year proffering Grace and Mercy to rebellious Sinners; now God waits long upon Sinners, even all the Day long; that is, all the Time of their Visitation, all the Time that their Day and Season of Grace lasteth, whilst Sinners are a wearying of his Patience, and grieving of his Spirit; now God calls and calls aloud, both by Mercy and by Judgment, both by his Word and by his Spirit, by loving Expostulations and earnest Intreaties to Sinners, to turn and be saved, saying, *Turn ye, turn ye; Why will ye die? Why will ye not be made clean? O when shall it once be!* Now he intreats you to come and be reconciled to him; now he offers you Grace and Mercy, and intreats you to accept it.

But at last, when the Day of Grace shall be spent, and Time at an End, then Christ's Grace and Mercy will be offered to Sinners no more; then God's Patience and Forbearance will be at an end, then his Spirit will no more strive with Men; then they shall have no more Calls from God, to turn and be saved, no more Tenders of Christ and Salvation, no more Proffers of Grace and Mercy; for then shall be an end of God's
Patience

Patience and Forbearance of his Calls and Invitations ; at the End of the World, all these Opportunities of Time shall cease and be no longer.

And thus for the first Particular, *What Time shall be no longer* ; it is not Time consider'd in it self, but the Opportunities of Time that shall cease and be no longer.

II. My Second Particular isto shew when Time shall be no longer ; that is, at the End of the World, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment, when the whole Frame of Nature shall be dissolved, when the Sun shall be turned into Darkness, and the Moon into Blood, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven ; and when the Powers of Heaven shall be shaken, and when Christ shall come in the Clouds with Power and great Glory, to judge both the Quick and the Dead ; it is then that Angel swears *by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be Time no longer*. But as for every particular Man, when once his Season of Grace is ended, and when he comes to die, and to take his Flight from Time to Eternity, then with him Time shall be no longer.

III. The Third Thing considerable, are the Reasons why Time shall be no longer. Now there might be many Reasons added, but I will reduce them all into these Three Heads.

1. Time shall at last cease and be no longer, that there might be a total End of that which is the worst of Evils, which is Sin. It is Sin that grieves God's Spirit, wearies his Patience, and crucifies afresh continually the Son of God, and puts him often to open Shame. Therefore God will at last put an end to Time, that he might ease himself of these great Evils ; God complains of wicked Men,

Men, that he is pressed with their wicked Ways, even as a Cart is pressed with Sheaves. But, *Ah!* saith the Lord, *I will ease me of mine adversaries,* Isa. 1. 24. God will at last put an end to Time, that he might ease himself of this Burthen; nay, the very Saints themselves, they with *Lot* are often vexed and grieved with the filthy Communication of the Wicked: Therefore they earnestly pray, that God would hasten the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there might be an end of these sinful Days.

2. Time shall at last cease and be no longer, for the sake of God's Elect, and for the fulfilling of those Promises which God hath made to them. Mark what our Blessed Saviour saith to this purpose, *Matth. 24. 22. Except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the elect sake those shall be shortened.* Now there be many that do misinterpret Christ's Words in this Place; For, say they, the World was at first to last six Thousand Years, two Thousand before the Law, two Thousand under the Law, and two Thousand under the Gospel. And from those Words of our Saviour Christ, *That for the elect sake, those days should be shortened;* they say, that much of their two Thousand Years under Christ shall be cut off, and so the Time shortened; but who can tell this that so long a Time the World was to endure, and much of that Time should be shortened? the Scripture reveals no such thing, the World may last six Thousand Years, the last Day may come at the end of six Thousand Years, or it may come sooner, that none can tell, it may be nearer than we are aware of; *for of that day and of that hour knoweth no man; no, nor the angels in heaven, nor the*

Son, but the Father only, Ver. 36. But you are to understand the Meaning of our Saviour's Words, here, thus, *Except those days should be shortned*; that is, except there come an end of those Days, *no flesh should be saved*; but for the elect sake, there shall come an End; for if those Days are not shortned, there would never be an End, but the World would continue for ever; and if there should never be an End, then there would never be a Day of Judgment, and if there never be a Day of Judgment, then there would never be a Resurrection; and if there never be a Resurrection, then the Bodies of the Elect would for ever lye rotten in their Graves, and then indeed no Flesh can be saved: indeed, at their Death, their Spirits are saved; but, *except those days shall be shortned*, or except there come an end of Time, no Flesh shall be saved; Therefore, for the Elects sake, there shall be an End of Time, wherein their Bodies shall be raised out of their Graves, and they shall then receive the Fulness of their Reward, which God hath promis'd, and laid up for them in Heaven.

3. And lastly, *Time shall at last cease, and be no longer*, that there might be an Accomplishment of all God's Threatnings to wicked Men: For God hath foretold, *That he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*, Eccles. 12. 14. But if there never comes an End of Time, then wicked Men shall never be brought to Judgment; then they shall never be called to a Reckoning for all their evil Deeds; and consequently they shall never come to their full Punishment: Therefore it is necessary, that there should at last be an End of these

these Opportunities, and Seasons of Grace, that there might come a Time wherein all Mankind might receive their full Reward, or their full Punishment, according as they have spent their Time here in this World. God will not always suffer the Wicked to prosper, he will not always let them alone to blaspheme his Name, to persecute his Saints, to prophane his Ordinances, to grieve his Spirit, to abuse his Goodness; tho' God bears with them for a while, yet he will not always bear with them, nor yet he will not always suffer his dear Children to be persecuted and afflicted, to live in Sorrow and Misery; therefore God will certainly at last put an End to Time, that he might put an End to the sinful Pleasures of the Wicked, and to the Sorrows of his Children; and punish the one with everlasting Torments in Hell, and reward the other with everlasting Joys in Heaven. That they also that will not accept of Mercy in time, whilst it is offer'd, when God call'd upon them, and intreated them to accept it, that they might at last, when Time shall be no longer, and when the Season of Mercy shall be past, be forc'd too late to cry for Mercy, when God will not regard them.

Now for these and the like Reasons, Time at last shall cease, and be no longer; therefore, *the angel swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer.*

The APPLICATION.

I Shall now go on by way of Application, and there are several Uses that I shall raise from thence; As,

I. My

I. My first Use shall be a Use of Instruction : Is it so, that at the End of the World, Time shall be no longer : Then from hence we may learn, that when Time is at an End, Eternity will certainly begin, both Eternity of Happiness to the Saints, and Eternity of Torments to the Wicked : When once these Opportunities of Time is at an End, then will follow an infinite Duration of Time, that shall never have an End. Oh ! how this will increase the Joys of the Saints, when they are entered into their joyful Place above, to think what a vast Ocean of Time is before them, what an infinite Million of Millions of Years, they have to possess these their Joys in ; and after Ten Thousand Millions of Years past, yet still their Joys are but beginning, and their Joys are as fresh to them, as they were at the first Entrance into them. And oh ! what a Hell of Hells this will be to the Damned, when they come into their Place of Torments, to think what a vast Ocean of Time is before them, to endure these their Torments in, what an infinite Million of Millions of Years they have to lie burning in these Hellish Flames ; and yet after Ten Hundred Thousand Thousand Millions of Years, they should be no nearer to an end ; no, not one Minute, nor one Moment nearer to an End, then they were the first Day they entred into these Torments ; nay, they shall be so far from ending, that they will be ever but beginning : And, Oh ! what a Hell of Hells this will be to the Damned, to think upon this ! Oh ! Eternity, Eternity ! Oh ! vast Eternity ! what Heart can conceive, what Tongue can express the Duration of it ! If we count as many Millions of Years as there are Stars in the Sky, and then

as many Millions of Years as there are Piles of Grass, and Trains of Corn that is growing, and has grown since the Creation of the World ; and then add to them as many Millions of Years as there has been living Creatures of all Sorts, from the Beginning of the World, and shall be to the End ; and likewise add to them the Number of the Dusts of the Earth, and the Sands upon the Seashore : Now, to one's thinking, all these Millions of Millions of Years will never be run out ; but yet in time they will be spent and run out ; yet, for all that, we are not come to an End, no, nor to the Beginning of Eternity : Eternity is an infinite Durative, that shall never, never have an End !

II. My Second Use shall be a Use of Reproof : Is it so, that at the End of Time, this golden Opportunity of Grace will be at an end ; and Time shall cease and be no longer ; and after this small scantling of Time, here follows an Eternity, either of Joy or Torments ? Then what shall we think of those that squander away these golden Opportunities, in doing that which is worse than nothing ! All the time that God is offering them Christ, Grace and Mercy, and calling upon them to repent, and accept of Mercy offered ; all that Time they waste in following their Lust, grieving his Spirit, despising his Mercy, and abusing his Goodness.

A great many among the poorer Sort, spend a great part of their precious Time in drudging in the World, in carking Cares, and in labouring to get a little of this World's Goods ; and it may be, as soon as they have got a little together, they die and leave it behind them : They can rise early and work, and eat, and drink, and sleep ; and, this is all that they can mind ; they don't consider, that

that they have an immortal Soul to look after ; that they have an Eternity to provide for ; they can spare no time for these things that are of greatest Concernment. Again, Others there are, that have more Time than the poorer sort ; yet, Oh ! How dreadful it is to consider, how their Time is squandered and wasted away ! Some spend much of their precious Time in unnecessary Visits, in following of Sports and Pastimes ; others waste much of their precious Time at Cards and Dice, others in Feasting and Drinking, in Rioting and Gaming ; some Ladies there are that waste much of their precious Time, and Day of Salvation, in Dressing and Decking themselves up in gaudy Attire, in Pride and Wantonness. And thus, all the Time that God is calling, wooing, and beseeching People both by his Word and Spirit, to repent and turn, and accept of Christ and Mercy ; he offers them better, sweeter, and more durable Pleasures, than these Earthly Delights ; if they will but hearken to his Calls, and return : All this while they are a Drinking, Gaming, and following the Pleasures of the Flesh ; and all the Perswasions, and all the Warnings in the World, will not take them off from their sinful course of Life. Again, Others there are, when they are alone, yet then there is much of their precious Time wasted by them in vain and sinful Imaginations ; so that God, and the Things of another World, is not in all their Thoughts. Ah ! when they are in Company, Oh ! what a great deal of Time is spent in vain and unprofitable Discourse ; but not a Word to edify one another ; nay, that which is saddest of all to consider is, that the Lord's Day, which is the most precious Season in all the Week, which is
a Day

a Day to be kept Holy to the Lord, in which we are not to think our own Thoughts, nor speak our own Words; but we should spend the whole Day in the Worship of God, in Reading and Praying, and godly Conference, in doing Good, and preparing our selves for Eternity,

On that Day especially, above all other Seasons, God calls and earnestly intreats Sinners, (both by his Word and Spirit,) to come in, and close with the Offers of Mercy, and proffers to help them, if they will but turn: And yet tho' that Day above all others, is the most golden Opportunity of Grace, yet a great many do squander and waste it away after a sad rate: They perhaps go to Church, and lend their Ears a while to the Word, and then as soon as they come out of the Church, they are a Discourſing about their worldly Affairs; nay, in many great Families, they waste their precious Time in a most sad manner; it would grieve any godly and devout Christian, to behold how the Lord's Days (as well as other Seasons) are wasted by many of them. They indeed join together in going to Church, to hear the Word Preach'd, and so far they do well enough; but then afterwards, when they come Home, there is scarce any thing ever heard from them, concerning the Sermon they heard, or concerning any Matters of their Souls, but the Evening of the Lord's Day, as well as other Times, is filled up, a great part of it, with their vain and unsavoury Discourse, in Laughing and Jestings, in telling of Stories, and in telling of what News they have heard that Day; with these, and the like Discourses, they fill up their precious Time, when their Discourse should be, for what end they were sent in-

in the World ; what a miserable Condition they are in by Nature, and what is like to become of them for ever, if they should die in that Condition ; of the Love of God towards Mankind, in working out their Redemption, in so wonderful a manner ; of their near Approach of Death, of the Shortness of their Time, of the great Account they are to make at the Day of Judgment, of the Felicity of Heaven, and of the Torments of Hell. Oh ! Friends, what a happy thing it would be, if you would but on the Lord's Day, and now and then, at other times, when you are together, enter into such serious Discourse as this, and strive by your winning Talk to help one another in the Way to Heaven ; then you would spend your Time well indeed. But in reprov'ing of others, I had need also reprove my self ; for I am certain, that I have enjoyed as many precious Opportunities of Grace, as most of you have ; but I have wasted the greatest part of them in Vanity and Foolery ; the Lord give both you and I, and all of us Grace to improve our Time better.

Oh ! What a dreadful Account shall we make at the great Tribunal, if we wast our Time thus, when we shall be called to a strict Account, how we have spent every Hour of our Time, what Answer do we think to make, when there shall be so many *Items* brought in ; As,

Item, For so much Time spent in vain and unprofitable Discourse.

Item, For so much Time spent in Feasting and Drinking.

Item, For so much Time wasted at Cards and Dice.

Item, For so much Time spent in Pride and Wantonness.

Item,

Item, For so much Time spent in Idleness.

(But, *Item,* For so much Time spent in Self-examination, in Repenting, Fasting, Praying, and Godly Conference :) Oh! How shall we be able to Answer this before the great Judge?

Now for Pagans and Heathens, who know not God, nor of a future State, for them to waste their Time in Fleshly Lust, is not so much. But we that live under the Gospel, under the Calls of God, under the Strivings of his Spirit, under the Offers of Grace: For us to waste our golden Season of Grace in following our carnal Delights, in Deafning our Ears to his Call, in grieving his Spirit, and abusing his gracious Offers of Mercy: For us to do it: Oh! How sad and dreadful will our Doom be at last; we above all others shall have the hottest Place in Hell. Oh! It is a sad Consideration for wicked Men to think of, that when they come to Hell, then they will cry out, Oh! that I had spent my Time better! Oh! that I had in Time hearkned to the Calls of God, and obeyed the Motions of his Spirit! Oh! the many Days and Nights that I have spent in Rioting and Drinking! Oh! the many Hours, that I consumed in Playing and Gaming! If I had but spent all that Time in examining my Heart and Life, in Fasting, in Praying, and in Repenting, in Weeping for my Sins, in Begging for Pardon and Mercy, for the sake of Christ, in striving to help others, with me, in the Way to Heaven, and in labouring to work out my own Salvation.

If I had but thus spent my Time, where might I now have been! I should never have been here in this dreadful Place; but now I should have been amongst yonder Saints, rejoicing and triumphing

phing with them in Glory : Oh ! that the Time
 past could but be called back again, and the Years
 that I have so vainly spent ! Oh ! that I could
 be admitted once more into the Assembly of
 God's Saints ; Oh ! That God would try me once
 more with the Means of Grace, (though I lived
 by nothing but by Bread and Water ;) Oh ! How
 I would condemn the World, and the Vanities
 thereof ; all the Temptations, Baits, and Allure-
 ments, that the World, the Flesh and the Devil
 can afford, should never more be able to draw me
 into Sin ! Oh ! How strictly, how holy, and how
 purely would I live. Oh ! It would make one's
 Heart even to ake, to consider what lamentable
 Outcries these damned Souls will then make :
 But alas ! now God tries them one Sabbath and
 another Sabbath, and then another ; he tries them
 one Year, and then another Year ; Year after
 Year they are called upon, both by God's Messen-
 gers, and by their godly Friends to repent, and
 be converted : How often have they offered Grace
 and Mercy in the Word, and by the Spirit, and lo-
 vingly intreated to accept it ? How often are they
 told, and told again, what will become of them
 if they consume their precious Time in fleshly Lust
 and Pleasures ; and yet all the Perswasions, and
 all the Warnings in the World, will not prevail ;
 nay, if the Messengers of God, and all their godly
 Friends and Neighbours, did fall on their Knees
 to them for the sake of Christ, that died for them,
 that they would take pity upon their poor Souls,
 and forsake their wicked Courses, and seek for
 Mercy and Pardon, before it be too late : But all
 the Means in the World will not prevail with
 them. And yet when Time is at an end, and the

the

the Gate of Mercy is shut, and nothing but an Eternity of Torments is before them, then they'll wring their Hands, and gnash their Teeth; and cry out, Oh! that I had been reformed, when I were so often called upon by God's Messengers, and my godly Friends; Oh! that God would try me once more. Sure if the Devil did not bewitch People, certainly they could never do as they do: *How often, saith Christ, would I have gathered ye together, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, but you would not, Matth. 23. 37.* I hope you will consider of these things in time, before it be too late.

III. My Third Use shall be of Expostulation: Beloved Friends, you see here how the Angel swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that Time shall be no longer. What is the Reason then, that you will not be perswaded to take hold of Time, in seeking of Mercy and Reconciliation with God, before it be too late? Oh! how lovingly God expostulates with his People, *Jer. 13. 27.* *Oh! Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean: Oh! when shall it once be?*

Thus he expostulates with every stubborn rebellious Sinner; Oh! Sinner, when wilt thou be made clean? Why wilt thou not repent and be reformed? How long shall I stand offering thee Christ, Pardon and Peace, and thou not accept of the Offer? How long shall I stand waiting for thy Repentance, and thou continuest in thy Impenitency, and weariest my Patience, and wilt not turn? How long shall I stand proffering thee Mercy and Pardon, and thou despise it? What is the Reason that no Means will work upon thee? How often have I called upon thee by my Word,
and

and wooed thee by my Spirit? How often have I sought to allure thee with Mercies, and terrifie thee with Judgments, and have given thee Warning after Warning, and yet nothing will prevail? Is the Loss of thy Immortal Soul, the Loss of Heaven and everlasting Life, so small a Matter with thee, that thou regardest it no more? Is it nothing to endure everlasting Burnings? Is it nothing to lie amongst Devils in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone? For my part, I desire not thy everlasting Misery, but had rather that thou wouldest in Time accept of Mercy, that thou mayest be saved; if I had any Delight in thy Damnation, thou hadst been in Hell long before this time; I had never stood waiting upon thee so long as I have done, suffering thee to grieve my Spirit, to tire my Patience, to turn my Grace into Wantonness, to trample under Foot the Blood of my dear Son, that was shed to wash away thy Sins; If I had delighted in thy Damnation, I had never called upon thee so often as I have done, to turn and live; I had never given thee so many Warnings as I have done: Oh! Sinner, do I deserve this unkind Dealing at thy Hands, that thou still abusest my Mercy and Goodness: When wilt thou return to me with a full Resolution to leave thy Sins, and become a new Creature, and accept of Mercy offer'd? When shall that Time come; Oh! When shall it once be? It is such a time as would rejoice the Angels to behold it.

And, Friends, is it not a great deal better, to be a Joy to Angels, than to be a Laughing-stock to Devils? Oh! Friends, if all these loving Exhortations will not prevail with you, I know not what will: What could God have done more for
you

you, than he hath done, when you have despised his Mercy offered, and deafned your Ears against his Calls ? yet God doth not presently cut you off, but he spares you, and tries you another Year, and then another ; and when you still refuse, and will not repent, then, it may be, God sends Sickness upon you, and the Messenger of Death to warn you ; and then, it may be, you resolve to lead a new Life, then you will become a new Creature ; I will henceforth lead a new Life, if it would please God to restore me once more to my former Health, I will never more spend my Time as I have done : Then it may be God tries you again with a new Life ; but now all these Purposes and Promises are forgot, and you are as bad, if not worse, than you were before : Now if neither Calls nor Invitations, if neither Mercies, nor Judgments, nor Warnings will prevail, I know not what can be said or done more.

IV. My Fourth Use shall be a Use of Motive : If all these Expostulations will not prevail, I will lay down serious Considerations, to move you to a timely Repentance ; and I will try what they can do, whether by them you will be stirred up to the Improvement of your Golden Season of Grace before it be at an End, and be no longer.

I. Consider, first, how your precious Time in this World is, it is far more precious than Gold ; now all the Gold, all the Riches, and all the Treasure in this World, cannot purchase one Minute of Time when it is gone and past : People don't know how precious their Time is, until they come to the End of it, and when once Time is at an End, O then they know the Worth of it : Now Sinners inquire, what they shall do to pass away

their Time? Time is so plenty with them, that they know not what to do with it; tho' they have so many sinful Lusts to mortifie, so many Corruptions to subdue, so many Sins to repent of, Christ to get an Interest in, and their Pardon to sue out, and Temptations to strive against, so much Work to do for God and their own Souls, and the Souls of others, and yet they know not how to spend their Time. Ay, but when once they come to lie upon their Death-bed, and see nothing before them but an Eternity of Misery: Oh! then they will prize Time after another Rate, then they will give ten thousand Worlds, if they had them, but for one Year, or but for one Quarter of a Year of that Time which they so vainly spent: Oh! if People did but know the Worth of Time as much as they will do then, then they would away with their Cards and Dice, and other Pastimes, and they would spend every Minute of it to the best Advantage they can for their Souls Eternal Welfare.

2 Consider, How dangerous it is to squander and waste away this your precious Time in fleshly Lusts and Pleasures; it may be you think of repenting hereafter, when you come to lye upon your Death-bed, but who knows but that you may die suddenly, as many do without the least Space to repent; and besides, it is a Madness for any to think to do that great Work in an Instant of Time, when Time is at an End, which is enough to fill up their whole Time: But supposing you should have a Breathing-space at the Day of Death, yet who knows how long the Season of Grace may continue? Behold! saith the Apostle, *now is the accepted time! behold! now is the day of salvation!* 2 Cor. 6. 2. It is now that God calls, and offers
you

you his Spirit to assist and help you, and promises to accept you, if you will but come at his Call; before he hath given you over to your selves; God who offers you Grace to Day, it may be, he will not offer it again to Morrow. I have read a sad Story of an extravagant young Man, who being often admonished by his godly Friends to repent, and reform his wicked Life, he presumptuously gave them this Answer: That if when he lay a dying, he did but say Three Words of Repentance, he should do well enough. These Three Words, I suppose was to be, *Lord, have Mercy upon me*: but on a certain Time, as he was riding over a narrow Bridge with his Horse, his Horse slipped, and fell in with him, and after struggling a while, he was heard to speak these Three Words, *Devil, Take All*. These were his Three Words of Repentance. It is therefore exceeding dangerous to put off our Great Work, until Time is at an End.

3. Consider, That the Season and Opportunity of Grace, is the greatest Mercy that we can enjoy; it is such a Mercy as was never vouchsafed to the fallen Angels: Thus God's Mercies are renewed to us every Morning; because he every Morning gives us, as it were, a new Life, and a new Opportunity of Grace: And, Friends, if you squander and trifle away such golden Opportunities, as God hath put into your Hands, you trample under Feet one of the choicest of God's Mercies; and do you think that God will bear this at your Hands?

4. Consider, That your Accepted Time and Season of Grace, is continually a wasting, whether you improve it well or not: Time is

continually passing away ; it will not stay for you, whilst you are a following your sinful Pleasures, and a wearying God's Patience, but it is continually hastning away ; when once the Sun is up, it keeps its Course, and never ceases going on, until it is gone down ; when once a Candle is lighted, it keeps continually burning, until it is done ; when once a Glass is turned, it never ceases running until it is out ; so soon as a Man is born, God doth immediately put an Opportunity of Grace into his Hands, and then it passes, and keeps passing away, and never ceases running, until it is at an End ; one Day follows another, one Sabbath follows another, and so Time keeps running on, until, at last, it will cease and be no longer.

5. Consider, How dreadful your State will be at last, if Time should be at an End, before you have made your Peace with God : If whilst you are sinning away your precious Time, God should clap a Curse upon your Souls, and swear in his Wrath, that you shall never enter into his Rest ; and so shut against you the Door of Mercy for ever. Oh ! what a dreadful Condition will you be in then ! Then it had been good for you if you had never been born ! Then you may knock at the Gate of Mercy too late, as the foolish Virgins did ; saying, *Lord, Lord, open to us* : But the Lord will send you away, with this dreadful Sentence, *I know ye not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity*. That is the most dreadfulest Place that is to be found in the Gospel ; read and tremble at it ; it is in *Luke 19. 42*. *As he drew nigh to Jerusalem, he looked upon it, (but it was with Tears in his Eyes) he wept over it, saying, If thou hadst*
known,

known, even thou, at least in this thy day, those things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. Oh! Friends! what a dreadful Thing it would be, if Christ should be now in Heaven, a weeping over any of us after this manner; saying, O Sinner! ~~that thou hadst~~ but known, even thou, at least in this thy Day of Grace, those Things which did concern thy everlasting Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes; now Grace is for ever gone from thee, now the Door of Hope is for ever shut against thee, now Mercy hath done with thee for ever, now thou mayst seek for Repentance, as Esau did, but shall never find it; now the Accepted Time and Day of Salvation is at an End; now thou mayst pray and cry, and beseech the Lord, even for the sake of Christ that died for thee, that he would bestow upon thee Pardon and Mercy, but all in vain. Oh! what a dreadful Thing would this be! There is such another dreadful Place in Ezek. 24. 13. Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. Because I would have purged by my Word, and by my Spirit, by Mercies, and Judgments, by Afflictions, and by Warnings, and thou wast not purged; no Means that could be used would purge thee from thy Sin; therefore now I will give thee over, my Spirit shall have done with thee, I will strive no more with thee, I will wait no longer, thou shalt never be purged any more, until I have caused my Wrath and Fury to rest upon thee, in endless and unsupportable Torments.

Most fearful is that Example of *Francis Spira*; so dreadful it is, that it is enough to make the stoutest Heart to ake, to hear the Story of it.

This *Francis Spira* was a Civil Lawyer; he was brought up, and lived Forty Years and more in the Romish Religion; about that time the Sun of the Gospel was risen in *Europe*; and this new Doctrine he liked and loved so well, that he forsook his Romish Principles, and embraced the Gospel of Christ, and preached it first to his own Family, and then to his Neighbours, and then in publick Meetings to the whole Country; insomuch, that he converted many from their Romish Principles, to the Doctrine of Christ, and caused them to embrace the Gospel, until at last he had brought himself into Danger, in that he must either against his Knowledge and Conscience, deny Christ, or else endure the extreamest Torments that Malice can inflict; or else he must forsake his House and Land, his Wife and Children, yea, and his own Country, and betake himself to a Foreign Country, there to endure a Thousand Miseries; and he, not knowing what Course to take, nor what to do, the Spirit of God came to him, and encouraged him to stand fast in the Faith of Christ, telling him, That he should not set his Hand-writing to the Legate; that Christ was able to defend him; and that though he did go to Prison, and to Death, yet an Eternal Reward remains for him in Heaven; yet this miserable Man consulting also with Flesh and Blood, went and set his Hand to the Legate; and so in part denied Christ; and then he was fain also to promise, and seal it in his own Country; and as he was going, the Spirit of God met with him the second Time, and he thought he heard a Voice, saying unto him, *Spira! What doest thou here? Whither goest thou? Hast thou, unhappy Man! given*
thy

thy Hand-writing to the Legate? Yet see that thou seal it not in thine own Country: Dost thou think Eternal Life so mean a Thing as to prefer this present Life before it? Remember, Man, that the Sufferings of this present Life is not worthy of the Glory that shall be revealed. If thou suffereſt with Christ, thou shalt also reign with him. Thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; nevertheless the Gate of Mercy is not quite shut: O heap not Sin upon Sin, lest thou repentest when it be too late. Now was Spira in a Wilderness of Doubt, not knowing whither to go, nor what to do: At last he went and asked Counsel of his Friends about it; and they, without any Consideration, persuaded him, that by no means he would bring himself and them into Danger, but that he would go to the Legate, and perform what he had promised.

Then, in the Morning, he desperately gets up, and enters into the Congregation, where, Mass being finished, he recites the Abjuration, word for word as it was written. This done, he was immediately fined Thirty Pieces of Gold, and then restored to his Goods, Wife and Children: But no sooner was he departed, but he heard a direful Voice, saying unto him, *Thou wicked Wretch! thou hast denied me! thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy Obedience! thou hast broken thy Vow! Hence, Apostate! bear with thee the Sentence of thy Eternal Damnation!*

Immediately Spira, trembling and quaking, fell into a Swoon: Help was at Hand for the Body, but never more could he find any Ease in his Mind; but was continually tormented with the Sense of God's Wrath, and was captivated under the revenging Hand of God.

Then his Friends began to repent too late of their rash Counsel, when he related to those that came to see him, of all the Passages that had happened, it made them all to weep and tremble. *As soon as the Sentence of Christ was passed against me, I knew that I was utterly undone ; He felt a continual Torment of his Mind, and a continual Butchery of his Conscience, that he professed, the Damned which is in Hell, endure not the like Misery : I feel, saith he, that God more and more hardens me ; I am one of those Reprobates that God would not have to be saved : And so, continuing in this State for six Weeks and more, he then at last ended this miserable Life in a dreadful Condition.*

I assure you, this is the dreadfull'st Example that ever I read in my whole Life : The Lord grant that none of us all may never come to this.

6. And lastly, Consider what a happy Condition you are yet in ; that yet you enjoy your golden Season of Grace, that God has not yet done calling ; that his Spirit hath not yet done striving ; that his Patience has not yet done waiting.

O how lovingly did the Spirit call upon *Francis Spira* the second time, after he had set his Hand-writing to the Legate, and told him, that yet the Gate of Mercy was not quite shut. O heap not Sin upon Sin, lest thou repentest when it will be too late. *What ! was not the Gate of Mercy quite shut ?* O what a comfortable Word was that ! As far as he had gone in renouncing his Profession, and denying of Christ, yet it was not too late, yet there was Mercy in store for him ; and it he had but then obeyed the Spirit, and not gone any farther, but repented of what he had already

already done, O what a happy Man had he been for ever! Oh! Friends! consider what a happy Condition you are in, that you are yet on this side Hell; that yet you enjoy the Seasons and Means of Grace, as long as you have run on in your sinful Course of Life, as long as you have been a wearying of God's Patience, as often as you have grieved his Spirit; yet there is Hope, yet the Gate of Mercy is not quite shut. O what happy Creatures you may yet be, if you will but now obey the Call of God, and return! Yet there is Mercy in store for you; but you know not how soon your Accepted Time may be at hand: It may be, God may wait upon you but one Sabbath more, and according as you spend that one Sabbath, so it must fare with you for ever; and if you obey and turn, tho' it be at the last Call of God's Spirit, you shall be accepted, pardoned and saved. O what a comfortable Thing is this, that yet there is Hope! that yet we may be happy if we will our selves! The Damned in Hell would give Millions of Worlds, if they had them, that it were with them as it is yet with us.

V. And lastly, I shall conclude with a few Words of Exhortation: I shall exhort you, in the Words of the Apostle; *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* Is it so that at last, Time shall be no longer? Then let me exhort you, now wisely to redeem your Time, your Accepted Time before it be gone; *O let the time past suffice, wherein we have wrought the will of the Gentiles,* 1. Pet. 4. 3.

Beloved Friends, You have wasted enough, and too much of your Time, in the Pleasures of the Flesh, and in the Works of the Devil. Oh! be

persuaded, for the Lord's sake, and for your Soul's sake, to spend the short Remainder of your Time in the Service of God, and in working out your own Salvation; whatsoever you are about, and wheresoever you are, whether alone or in Company, yet still be a Redeeming your Time: When you are alone, then let your Time be redeemed by Self-Examination, by Ejaculations and Prayers, by Meditations and Contemplations; and when you are among Company, though it be about the Works of your Calling, O then be careful to improve your Time well; instruct them you see are ignorant; reprove them that are sinful; spend your Time, when you be together, in discoursing to one another, Of the End why you were born; of your miserable Estate by Nature; of the Sufferings of Christ for your Sins; of the Shortness of your Time, and of your future Estate in another World. Let these and such like Discourses fill up your Time. Oh! labour with all your Might to win the Souls of one another, and to help one another in the way to Heaven daily, *while it is called to Day*: O what a happy Work you would perform, if by your seasonable Discourse, you would convert a Soul to God.

Friends, If you would do this, it must be now, while they and you live together, which will be but for a little while; for when Time is at an End, then it will be too late to do it, then our Condition will be unalterable for ever: Therefore, what you do for the Salvation of your own Souls, and for the Salvation of the Souls of others, you must do it now or never.

To conclude: Be exhorted to spend that small Remnant of your Time in Praying, Repenting of
your

your Sins, and Working out your Salvation; and then at last, when Time shall cease and be no longer, you shall be received into an Eternity of Joy and Felicity, there to live and reign for ever.

Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you Understanding.

The End of the Fourth SERMON.

A Confession and Prayer, for a penitent Sinner, on this Subject or Discourse.

O Most Gracious, most Glorious, and Eternal Lord GOD; who art Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last; thou art God from Everlasting, and thy Years shall have no End; thou art Righteous in all thy Ways, and Holy in all thy Works: Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold the least Sin with any Allowance; so that as soon as the Angels had sinned, thou immediately castest them down out of Heaven, and reservest them under Chains of Darkness, unto the Dreadful Coming of the Great Day, without affording them the least Hope of Mercy, or the least Opportunity of seeking Peace, and Reconciliation with thee: Whereas, when we were lost and undone, by the Apostasy of our first Parents, thou didst give thy Dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to offer himself a Sacrifice upon the Cross for us, and for his sake hath put an Opportunity of Grace into our Hands; thou hast given every one of us a Day and Season wherein we might be accepted: But, Oh! vile Wretch that I am,

I squander'd and trifled away this Season of Grace, in fleshly Lusts and Pleasures: All the Time that thou hast been offering Mercy, Pardon, and Peace; all that Time I have consumed in gratifying the Flesh, and in following my sensual Delights: O Lord, I do here with Shame and Horror confess that I have, throughout the whole Course of my Life, neglected Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer, that would have saved me from Wrath and Damnation; I have rejected that Pardon & Peace, which from Time to Time thou hast stood proffering me; I have wearied thy Patience, which has been stretch'd out into Long-suffering. How often hast thou called unto me, outwardly by thy Word, and inwardly by thy Spirit; but I have turned a deaf Ear to all thy Calls and Invitations. How often hast thou stood knocking at the Door of my hard Heart for entrance; but I have barred it against thee by Unbelief and Impenitency. Thou hast spared me from one Sabbath to another; from one Year to another, and still waitest for my Repentance; thou hast sought to move me with Mercies, and terrifie me with Judgments; yet neither Mercies, nor Judgments, would work any good Effect upon me. When thou hast smitten me with Affliction, yet then I rebelled more against thee. When thou hast sent Sicknes upon me, even near unto Death, then I made many fair Promises to lead a new Life, if it should please thee to restore me once more to my former Health; and then thou, in Mercy, didst try me, as it were; with another Life: But then, miserable

Wretch

Wretch that I am ! I returned again to my old Course of Life, soon forgetting the Promises which I made in my Sickness ; yea all the day long thou hast stretched out thy hand unto me, a disobedient and gainsaying Wretch, and offered me Grace and Mercy in Jesus Christ, and hast entreated me to accept it : But, ah ! miserable Wretch that I am ! I have continued in my Rebellion against thee, quenching and grieving thy Holy Spirit which would have sealed me unto the Day of Redemption, wearying thy Patience, and abusing thy Mercy and Goodness, and turning thy Grace into Wantonness ; O Lord, what can I justly expect, but that thou shouldest resolve, that thy Spirit shall never more strive with me ; and seeing I would not be purged, therefore I should never be purged from my Filthiness any more, until thou hast caused thy ~~Fury~~ to rest upon me, and so bind me over to perpetual Wrath ? Lord, I confess, if it had not been for thy wonderful great Mercy towards me, I might long before this time amongst Devils been howling and skreeking in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone. O Lord, what a Wonder it is, that such a Wretch as I, am not in Hell, that still thou sparest me, and expectest my Repentance ; that yet there is Hope, that the Gate of Mercy is not quite shut against me ! Sure, if thou hadst took any Delight in my Damnation, thou couldst never have born so much at my hands, as thou hast done ; thou wouldest never have suffered me to abuse thy Mercy and Goodness, as thou hast done : But seeing, O Lord, that thou hast
spared.

spared me so long, and still continueth to me the Season and Means of Grace, O Lord, I will never more spend my Time, as I have done, in following the Pleasures of the Flesh, and grieving thy Holy Spirit; and I do purpose, and resolve, through thy Grace assisting me, to resign my Will to thy holy and heavenly VWill, and to spend the Remainder of my Time in Obedience to thy holy Law, and Commandments; and to this End, O Lord, I humbly beseech thee, to grant me the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, for of my self I can do nothing: and let this thy Spirit mollifie my hard and obdurate Heart, that I may with hearty Sorrow, bewail my lost and mispent Time, and that I may double my Diligence for the Time to come. Pardon, O Lord, I beseech thee, those Sins which formerly I have committed, and give me Grace, that I may watch and strive against the like Sins for the Time to come. O Lord, though I have long continued in my Rebellion against thee; yet, Lord, I beseech thee, cast me not off now at length, a miserable Sinner, who returns unto thee with an humble and penitent Heart; take not away from me thy Holy Spirit, tho' it hath long and often been grieved by me: Say not, that now it is too late. Lord, shut not against me the Gate of Mercy; let not my Soul perish, for whom Christ died; but if it be thy VWill, that I must perish, Lord, I here cast down my self, at the Feet of Christ; and if I perish, I will perish there. O Lord, I know that my Accepted Time, and Season of Grace, is the greatest Mercy

Mercy that I can enjoy; it is such a Mercy, as was never vouchsafed to the lost Angels; it is such a Mercy as the Damned would give Millions of Worlds, if they had them, that they were try'd with it once more. Lord, I beseech thee, give me Grace, that I may now prize this Mercy better than ever I have done. O let the Time past suffice, wherein I have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, and followed my sinful Lust and Pleasure; and give me Grace to dedicate the Remainder of my Time to thee, and thy Service. Lord, make me wise, to know and consider, now in this my Day of Visitation, the Things that concern my Everlasting Peace, before they are hid from mine Eyes: and the Time which others spend in Rioting, and Gaming, and fleshly Lust; Lord give me Grace to spend that Time in Fasting, Praying, Repenting, and Labouring to work out my Salvation; so that, at last, when Time shall cease, and be no longer, I may enter into an Eternity of Joy and Felicity. These, and all other Mercies, which thou knowest to be needful for me, I humbly beg at thy Hands, in that Form of Prayer which Christ himself hath taught me, saying, Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

If you know these Things, blessed and happy are you, if you thus redeem your now Accepted Time and Season of Grace; which, that we may all do,

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God the Father, and the sweet and comfortable Fellowship of God the Holy Ghost be with us, and remain with us, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

Joshua's

Joshua's Resolution

T O

Serve the LORD, &c.

Josh. XXIV. part of Ver. xv.

But as for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.

THESE are the Words of Joshua to the Tribes of Israel: For having, in this Chapter, declared unto them, the many Benefits which God of his Mercy hath bestowed on them; as, particularly, in *Ver. 15.* in that he hath given them a Land they laboured not for, and Cities which they built not, and Vine-yards, and Olive-yards to eat of, which they planted not: Joshua having thus laid before their Eyes God's Benefits, he, in *Ver. 14.* exhorts them to offer unto God a thankful and obedient Heart for those Benefits which he hath bestowed upon them: Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: And put away the gods which your fathers served, and serve the Lord. And so I fall immediately upon the Words of the Text, wherein we have these Two considerable Things:

First, The Freedom which Joshua seems to give the Tribes of Israel, in case they refuse to serve

serve the Lord, that they should chuse who they will serve.

Secondly, His Resolution concerning himself and his Family : *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

Now in this small Treatise, I shall join these two together into this one Observation : That is, However the Men of this World live, whatever they do, what ways soever they follow ; a Child of God is fully bent, and resolved to cleave to the Lord, and to take Care that his Family, and all under his Charge, walk in the Ways of Holiness and Piety.

Now for my farther Handling of this Subject, I shall proceed after this manner :

First, I shall shew you what the Resolution of a Christian is.

Secondly, The Reasons of this Resolution. And, *Lastly*, the Application.

I. To shew you what the Resolution of a Christian is : 1. It is a full and firm Resolution. 2. It is a present Resolution. 3. It is a settled and deliberate Resolution.

First, The Resolution of a Christian, is a full and firm Resolution. The Men of this World they naturally chuse Sin, Death, and Hell ; they chuse Death and Damnation, before Life and Salvation ; they resolutely run on in the Ways of Luxury, Wantonness, Drinking, Gaming, and all manner of lewd and loose Practices ; and though they are told and told again, both by the Messengers of God's Word, and their Godly Friends, whither these ungodly Ways will lead them ; yet they will run on still, and take their own Course, as if they were in Love with their own Ruin and Destruction,
But

But a true Christian, after all his Reproofs and Admonitions, when he finds that they will not be reclaimed, he, as it were, bids them take their Course, and chuse whom they will serve ; as *Joshua* did the People of *Israel* : But, for his part, he resolved with full Bent and Purpose of Heart, to give himself up to the Lord, and chuse him for his Portion, and to yield up himself Soul and Body as an Instrument for his Service.

Now the Resolution of a Christian is not a Sick-Bed Promise, but a full Bent and Purpose of Heart, to lead a New Life. There are many that fairly promise, but few resolve ; every weak Promise is not a full Resolution. Alas ! how many are there, who under a sharp Fit of Sicknefs, or under some Judgment ready to befall them, will promise fair what new Creatures they will become, what new Lives they will lead, how holy and how purely they will live ; but if it please God to spare them, and give them a Time of Respite, then how soon are these Vows and Promises forgot : Thus the Children of *Israel*, how fairly did they promise, *Deut. 5. 27. All that the Lord our God shall speak, we will hear and do* : But though they had a Tongue to promise, yet they had no Heart to perform ; as you may see, *Ver. 29. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments, that it may be well with them.* But as for a sincere returning Sinner, he not only promises but resolves to yield up himself Body and Soul to be the Lord's ; yea, the whole Frame of his Heart is bent that way ; as an unconverted wicked Sinner goes on in Sin, with a full Purpose of Heart ; even so a returning Sinner, who is coming to Jesus Christ,

serves

serves him with full Purpose and Resolution of Heart. And as a wicked resolute Sinner, neither Mercies nor Judgments, neither Reproofs nor Admonitions, neither Persuading nor Entreating by Ministers nor Friends, will stop him in his sinful Course : So on the other side, a returning Sinner, that is resolved for Christ and Holiness, will not be drawn back, neither by Promises nor Threatnings, neither by Frowns nor Flatteries ; let his sinful Companions entice him by never so many Arguments, he will not consent, but he is fully bent and resolved for Heaven and Happiness whatever it cost him ; and therefore, seeing the Weakness of his own Flesh, and his natural Inclination to be overcome by the least Temptation ; therefore he plies to the Throne of Grace, and there he pours out earnest Prayers and Supplications for the Assistance of Divine Grace, to strengthen him in the inner Man ; he dares not trust to his own Strength, he considers how soon Peter was overcome, notwithstanding his Resolution to stand ; saying, *If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee* ; and yet because he was too confident of his own Strength, it pleased God for his Tryal, to leave him to himself, how soon he denied and forswore his Lord and Saviour, he began to curse and swear, *that he knew him not, Mat. 26.* Now, I say, a returning Sinner, considering this, he dares not resolve in his own Strength, but labours and endeavours in the Use of all Means to get Strength from Heaven ; and in the Strength of Christ, he strives and labours to go on towards the Heavenly Mark he aims at, he rests not in any certain Attainments, but truly resolves by the Help of Divine Grace, towards the Mortification

of the whole Body of Sin, and for the Attainment of Grace and Holiness unto Perfection.

And, after he has done his best, yet still he feels Lust to be strong in him, and Grace weak ; therefore he is more and more outrageous against his natural Inclinations, and his earnest Desire and Endeavours are to be more and more Humble, more Patient, more Meek, more Holy, and more Heavenly ; let the Devil tempt him with Riches, Honour, Long-life, and all Earthly Happiness, on Condition, that he turn back again into the Ways of Sin, yet he will not yield, but resists him with all his Might and Strength ; nay, tho' all the Powers of Hell use their utmost Endeavours to draw him back, tho' the Flesh entice, and the wicked World use all Means to discourage him, yet, in spite of them all, he is resolved to go on in his holy Course ; for, *neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, is able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. 8. Thus a sincere returning Sinner is fully bent and resolved to give himself up Body and Soul to the Lord : And the whole Frame and Bent of his Heart is towards Grace and Holiness.

That is the first Thing considerable, That a Christian's Resolution is a full Resolution.

Secondly, It is a present Resolution : he is not for Delays and Put-offs, but resolves presently to turn.

A Man, you know, that is fully bent and resolved to do a Thing, his earnest Desire is to be about it, that it may be done, he is not for putting it off from one time to another, as if he did not care whether it were done or no. Even so a Christian that is
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fully bent and resolved after Grace and Holiness, he longs and desires for the Attainment of his holy Ends, the whole Frame of his Heart is set that Way; and therefore he presently sets about the Work without Delay. Indeed, a Hypocrite has many Purposes and Resolutions to repent, and become a new Creature; but he delays and puts off from one time to another, being loth for the present, to part with sweet Sin, with his beloved Lust, which shews, that his Resolution is not a firm and settled Resolution, his Purposes are un-sound and hypocritical.

There was one (*Luke 9. 61.*) who made a kind of a Resolution to follow Christ; but this Resolution was not for the present, he begged Liberty to go once more to his sinful Companions, and take his Leave of them: *Lord, saith he, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.* This shews, that his Purpose and Resolution was not sincere; he made a kind of Resolution to follow Christ; but here lies the Case, there was not a thorough Change wrought in him, he had not rooted out his beloved Sin; the Frame and Bent of his Heart was more towards the following of his Lust, than it was to follow Christ: Therefore, in setting his Hand to the Plough, by making a Resolution to follow Christ, and yet looking back with Pleasure and Delight upon his old sinful Course of Life, he was not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven; as our Saviour tells him. *Ver. 62. Lord, saith he, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

Thus a wicked Man, when he is intreated and persuaded by a Minister of God's Word, or by
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any of his Godly Relations, to repent and forsake his evil Practices, and to lead a new Life; he, perhaps, under these Godly Admonitions, makes fair Promises, and has some Purposes and Resolutions to repent, and become a new Creature; and yet, notwithstanding these Purposes and Resolutions, he has many Delays and Put-off's, because his Heart remains still wedded to his Lust. The Drunkard, he promises, that he will return and follow Christ; but he takes Leave first to go once more to the Alehouse, and take Leave of his drunken Companions, and take one merry Cup more with them, and then he will come and follow Christ: He has Friends at Home at his House, and he must first go and take his Leave of them, and make one merry Meeting more among them, and enjoy a little more of their jovial Company, and then he will follow Christ. The Covetous, he must have Leave first to pursue after a little more of this World's Goods, and then he will follow Christ. The Voluptuous, he must have Leave first to partake a little more of the Sweet of Sin, he must enjoy a little more of his beloved Pleasure, he must down with one sweet Morsel more, and then he will follow Christ.

Thus Sin is so sweet unto a wicked Man, the World and the Flesh is so bewitching, that notwithstanding a Sinner's fair Promises and Purposes to repent, and turn to God, that by these he is hindered of putting any thing into Practise, but procrastinates and puts off from one time to another, until, perhaps, Time is at an End, before he has done any thing in order to his Eternal Salvation.

But a Christian that is fully and firmly resolved

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to dedicate himself to the Lord and his Service, so that the whole Frame of his Heart is bent that way, he is so far from delaying, and putting off from one time to another, that he is even restless, and can find no Contentment in any thing he enjoys, until he has got an Interest in Christ, until he has got some Assurance of the Love of God, and the Pardon of his Sins; it grieves him to the very Heart, to think that he should be so wild and foolish, as to waste so much of his precious Time, as he has done in fleshly Lust, in abusing God's Mercy and Goodness, and grieving his Spirit; in that he has made a good and gracious God wait upon him so many Years, whilst he continued to run on in a Course of Rebellion against him. And therefore he now resolves, thro' the Grace of God assisting him, from this time forward to bid an everlasting Farewel to his beloved Sin, he now fully resolves to continue no longer in his sinful Course of Life; he is ready to cry out with St. Augustine, *How long shall I say, To Morrow, To Morrow? Why shall not this Day be the Day of my Conversion?* He therefore, without Delay, sets about the Work of Conversion; he now begins to beg, labour, and strive to work out his Salvation.

Thus a Christian's Resolution is a present Resolution.

Thirdly and Lastly, A Christian's Resolution is a settled and deliberate Resolution.

He doth not, as many do, take up a sudden and inconsiderate Resolution, to follow Christ: But he diligently considers;

I. What it might cost him to be a thorough Christian; the Death of his beloved Sin, that he knows

knows it must cost him, he knows he must part with every Sin ; even with his most Flesh-pleasing Sin for Christ, or else he can be no true Christian : But he considers that it may cost him the Loss of his Credit and good Name, the Loss of Liberty, nay, the Loss of his Life.

Now a penitent Sinner considers diligently of all these Things before he enters upon his Christian Course, lest after he has gone far with Christ, Persecution comes, and he apostatize and falls away, and so his latter End be worse than his Beginning : *What man, saith our Saviour, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it, lest haply after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that behold him begin to mock him, Luke 14. 28, 29. So whosoever, saith he, forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple, Ver. 33.* Many have gone far with Christ ; so far as their Interest lay with the Interest of Christ ; but when the Interest of Christ and their own Interest crost, then they have apostatized and fell away. But on the contrary, a wise Christian, before he enters upon a new Life, he first sits down and counts the Cost ; he considers upon *Peter* how sadly he fell when Christ had left him unto himself, notwithstanding his strong Resolution ; saying, *If all should deny thee, yet will not I* : therefore he dares not purpose and resolve in his own Strength, for he knows himself to be very weak ; and cannot move one step towards Heaven without Divine Assistance ; therefore he is Night and Day in earnest Prayer to God, for Strength from Heaven ; and so in the Strength of Christ, he is resolved to
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take him for better and for worse, he is resolved to run all Hazards with him, he is resolved to venture all for him, to venture the Loss of a good Name, the Loss of Liberty, and the Loss of Life it self ; as he expects to reign with Christ, so he resolves to chuse him with all his Offices, as a Prophet to instruct him, as a King to reign over him, and rule in him, as a Saviour to save him from Sin, as well as from Punishment ; he is resolved to off with his Right-hand Sins, and out with his Right-eye Sins ; he is resolved to spare no Sin, but to strive against it, watch against it, and fight against it with all his Might : He is resolved to take Christ as he is offered upon Self-denying Terms ; he is resolved to give up himself Body and Soul to Christ, to walk with him, to suffer with him, and to die with him, if he be called thereunto ; he is resolved to forsake all for him that stands in Comperition with him, and so to live by Faith, and rest fully and wholly upon his Word and Promise for eternal Salvation ; he is resolved to follow Christ through all Difficulties and Dangers, through Sufferings and Persecutions, through Life and Death, until he comes to reign with Christ in Glory,

Thus have I done with the first Thing considerable, What the Resolution of a Christian is ; I must be very brief in what follows :

II. The Reason of the Necessity of this Resolution. Now for a Christian to make a settled and firm Resolution is very necessary :

I. Because, that until a Man sets a firm and full Resolution to turn to God, he is in a ready way to fall by every Temptation ; he is apt to put off and delay his Repentance from time to time ; he

is still liable to give himself more and more Liberty to all kind of Wickedness, to let the Bridle loose to his Lust ; nay, until a Man comes unto a full and settled Resolution, he lies in the ready Road to open Prophaneness, and to the Neglect of God and Holy Duties : And when he performs Duties, it is with such Coldness and Formality, as if he cared not whether he performed them or no. But when a Man comes to a resolved Point, when the whole Frame and Bent of his Heart is set toward Christ and Holiness, then there will appear earnest Endeavours after the thing resolved upon : When once a Sinner comes to be resolved, then he delays no longer, but immediately sets about the Work of Conversion ; then he is upon his Watch, and puts on the whole Armour of God, and strives and fights against Sin and spiritual Wickedness. This was the Resolution of Job, Job 31. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid ?* As if he had said, *I have resolved and made a covenant with my self, as much as in me lies, to avoid all temptation to sin ; why then should I run my self into temptation ?* This also was the Resolution of David, Psalm 39. 1. *I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, I will keep my mouth with a bridle.* And this is the Resolution of every true Christian ; a settled, firm and sincere Resolution is a great Enemy to Sin and Satan.

2. This settled and firm Resolution is necessary to Repentance, because it is the first Step to Repentance. A Man may do many things in order to a Work of Conversion, yet if he have not a settled and firm Resolution to turn to God, he were

as good do nothing. But when once a Man comes to set up a settled, firm, sincere, and hearty Resolution, to cleave fully and wholly to the Lord, and to resign up all the Faculties of his Soul to him, then the Work is more than half done. All the other Duties of Christianity will seem easie and pleasant. *David*, he resolved and swore, and therefore he would perform: *I have sworn, saith he, and therefore will perform, that I will keep thy statutes,* Psalm 119. 106.

Thus much for the Doctrinal Part; I shall be very short in the Application.

There is but one Use that I shall make of this Point, and that shall be a Use of Exhortation: Is it so, that whatever the People of *Israel* did, *Joshua* was resolved that he and his House will serve the Lord? Why, beloved Friends, let me exhort you, nay, let me intreat you all to enter upon a full, firm, present, settled and deliberate Resolution, that you and your Families will serve the Lord.

In the first Place, make a firm Resolution to give up your own selves to the Lord, and his Service; let the Men of this World do what they please; if they will not be reform'd, let them take their Course; if they are so in love with Hell and Damnation, so that they will run headlong thither; let them take their Course.

But, my dear Friends, into whose Hands this little Book shall come, do you sincerely resolve to give up your selves to the Lord, and his Service; if others will be for Hell, do you resolve to be for Heaven; whatever it cost you, resolve to cleave close to the Lord in Opposition to the Malice of the Devil, the Inticements of the Flesh, and the

Temptations of this wicked World. If wicked Men should intice and seek to draw you into Sin with them, do not yield, but rather answer them as Joseph did his Mistress, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Gen. 39. 9. If at any Time any of your old sinful Companions do intice, persuade, and intreat you to go with them to Drinking, Gaming, or any other vile Exercise, resolve with your selves never to yield to none of their persuading Arguments; labour to obey the Counsel of Solomon, *My Son, if sinners intice thee, consent thou not.*

Friends, Be exhorted now to make a firm and strong Resolution against all Difficulties, and Dangers, and Oppositions, dedicate your selves, Soul and Body, to the Lord; let others chuse what they will, do you chuse the Lord for your Portion, in all his personal Relations, and in all his essential Perfections, resolve to take him as a holy God, as a Sin-hating God, *and labour to be holy, even as he is holy,* 1 Pet. 1. 16. And resolve to chuse the Laws of Christ, as your Rule and Pattern; *I have, saith David, stuck to thy testimonies, I have inclined my heart unto thy statutes always, even to the end,* Psalm 113. 31. Resolve to take Christ in all his Offices, in all his Inconveniences, resolve to run all Hazards with him; be exhorted now without Delay, to bid an everlasting Farewell to all your Sins, and from henceforth make a firm Covenant with thy Body and Soul to be his, saying, *Lord, I do here lament, and am heartily grieved, that I have spent so much of my Time in Rebellion against thee, and in chusing the Ways of Sin: but I do here, from this Time forward, firmly resolve to bid an utter Defiance to all Sin, and, through thy*
Grace

Grace enabling me, now covenant with thee to be thine, and to forsake all that is near and dear unto me in this World for thy sake: I am resolved never more to yield my self a Servant to Sin and Satan, but to watch against all Temptation, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, but I do resolve to take thee for my Portion and Happiness, promising and vowing to serve thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life; and I do here fully resolve to chuse Jesus Christ as the Way to the Father, and to take my Lot with him, and to run all Hazards with him, resting upon him alone, in his Way for Salvation.

Secondly, Resolve not only to give up your selves to the Lord, but resolve to use your utmost Endeavours, that all under your Charge may likewise serve the Lord; as Joshua here did, not only resolve to serve the Lord himself, but he resolved both he and his House should serve the Lord.

So, my Friends, you that are Housholders and Governours of Families, let me exhort you to labour to set up the Worship of God in your Families; though you cannot inspire Grace into your Children and Servants, yet you may labour to convince them of their Sin and Misery by Nature, you may reprove them, and instruct and teach them in the Principles of Religion, and joyn with them in Prayer and Holy Exercises. Oh! it is dreadful to consider, that there should be so many Thousand Families in the World, that are ungodly and prophane Families; many Governours of Families can take Care, that their Servants rise early in the Morning, and go about their Work, they can take Care, that they be diligent about their Business, but they take no Care about the Concern of their Souls; they can take Notice how

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they do their Work, and are ready to be outrageous with them for every Fault, but yet can hear them curse and swear, and see them prophane the Lord's Day, and see them live loose and prophane Lives, and live in open Rebellion against the Lord, and yet take little or no Notice of all this ; they scarce ever call upon their Servants to read, nor read themselves unto them, nor yet do they pray with them, except it be now and then upon a Lord's Day.

For my part, I have been in many Families, but I never met but with here and there one where the Worship of God and Religious Exercises hath been set up among them. I may speak it with Shame enough ; for they never regard what becomes of their poor immortal Souls.

Truly, Friends, I am apt to think, that there being such a Multitude of prophane irreligious Families among us in England, that it is a Fore-runner of some sad Judgment approaching ; for, if the Scripture be the true Word of God, so indeed we must expect some sad Calamity to befall us e'er long, if there be not a speedy Reformation in Houses and Families : See what a Threatning there lies in the Word of God against such, Jer. 10. 25. *That the Lord will pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and upon the nations that call not upon his Name.* The Heathen here is meant, all ungodly irreligious Families : Let us, the People of this Land, have a Care, that this Sentence be not pronounced against us ; many of late have complained of the Badness of the Times, that Trading is dead, Money is scarce, and every thing is dear.

But, Friends, let there but be a Thought of
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Reformation in Houses and Families, and then you will as soon see as peaceable and happy Times, as ever was known since *England* has been inhabited. But if People will still remain to be irreligious and prophane in their Families, I am afraid that some sadder Judgment will befall us than ever yet we have seen: How can we expect Deliverance from our Enemies, and happy Times, whilst the Worship of God is so much neglected, and Family Duties never regarded?

To conclude: You that are Parents, Masters, and Householders, if ever you desire your own Good, and a Blessing upon your Families, and Undertakings, and the Good of this Nation, be intreated now, to suffer the Word of Exhortation; Be exhorted now, no longer to neglect the Worship and Service of God in your Families; but as often as you see your Servants and Children sin against God, reprove them; where you see them ignorant, instruct them.

Let me counsel you to do this at convenient Opportunities: To catechize your Children and Servants at least once every Week, and instruct them in the Principles of Religion: Every Lord's Day in the Morning, call them up earlier than you do on other Days; and as soon as they have done their necessary Business, before you go with them to the publick Worship of God, read to them some part of God's Word, and then give them some private Instruction concerning what they have read; and call upon them to read some of God's Word, and then join with them in Prayer; and after publick Worship, call every one of them to an Account, concerning the Sermon they heard, and stir up their Memories with it, and

edifie them as much as you can with these good Instructions, which the Preacher has delivered out of the Word of God, and then instruct them in the Principles of Religion; and conclude the Evening of the Lord's Day, in Reading and Godly Conferences, singing of Psalms and Praying. And every Morning in the Week call your Children and Servants together, and pray with them, before they and you go about the Works of your Calling: And let Godly Conference and Prayer, be every Evening's Exercise, before you go to Rest; and make a firm and strong Resolution, as *Jeshuadid* here, That, let others serve whom they will, you'll serve the Lord God of Israel, saying, *As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.*

The End of the Fifth SERMON.

A PRAYER for a FAMILY.

O Most gracious, most glorious, and ever-blessed Lord God, who art perfect in Holiness, and infinite in all thy Perfections, look down from Heaven we beseech thee, with an Eye of Pity and Compassion, upon thine unworthy Servants, sinful Dust and Ashes; who desires at this time, with all Reverence and Humility, to address our selves unto thee, to offer up unto thee our Petitions and Requests in thy Son's Name: But, Lord, we do humbly acknowledge and confess, that our Transgressions are so many, and so grievous, that we are ashamed to lift up our Eyes to Heaven, or to take thy holy Name into our polluted Lips: For, Lord, we confess, that we are conceived and born in Sin, we brought

brought into this World a Stock of Original Corruption, which we have derived from our first Parents actual Transgressions; and, if that were not enough to make us miserable for ever, we have gone on all our Lives in a Course of actual Rebellion against thee; we are naturally prone to all manner of Evil, but we are backward and averse to any thing that is good: so that we are born Children of Wrath, and Heirs of Hell and Damnation; and yet if we are not miserable enough by Nature, we have done what in us lies to make our selves more miserable. Lord, we confess as we have grown in Years, so we have increased in all manner of Sin and Ungodliness, so that we have abused thy Goodness, which should have led us to Repentance; we have run wilfully into Sin, against the Light of our Knowledge, against the Dictates of our own Conscience; we have grieved thy Spirit, wearied thy Patience, and turned a deaf Ear to thy heavenly Calls, and slighted thy Offers of Grace and Mercy through Jesus Christ. Ah! wile Wretches that we are, we have lived as if thou didst send us into this World for nothing but to gratifie the Flesh, and please our sensual Appetites; but we have forgot those high and holy Ends, which thou hast made us for, which is to live to thy Praise and Glory; How often hast thou stood knocking at the Door of our hard Hearts for entrance, but we have barred them up against thee by Impenitency and Unbelief? If thou, Lord, shouldst deal with us according to our Deserts, what can we

expect at thy Hands but Wrath, and our everlasting Condemnation: But, Lord, as thou hast out of thine unspeakable Love toward Mankind, sent thy dear Son into the World to be a Propitiation for our Sins, and by his Sufferings, and Death, to take away the Sins of the World; we humbly pray thee for his sake, and for that bitter Death and bloody Passion's sake, which we believe that he hath suffered for us, that thou wouldst pardon and forgive us all our Sins: blot them, we beseech thee, out of the Book of thy Remembrance, nail them to his Cross, and bury them in his Grave, that they may never rise up against us, to shame and confound us in this World, or to condemn us for ever in the World to come: And to this end, Lord, we humbly pray thee, that thou wouldst give us a true and lively Faith in his Merits; and, Lord, let it not be a dead and fruitless Faith, but let it be a lively and active Faith, that we may bring forth the Fruits of it in our Lives and Conversations; let us no longer live in Sin, but let us live by Faith in the Son of God: O let not this be an Aggravation of our Condemnation, that we have had a Saviour offered us, but we have wilfully rejected him; but grant, Lord, that we may heartily and thankfully accept of that Redemption which he has purchased for us; grant that we may receive and embrace him, upon such Terms as he is offered to us in the Gospel. O let Christ be most precious in our Eyes; yea, more precious than Gold and Silver; and grant that we may esteem all the Riches and all the Profits of this World

World to be but as Dross and Dung in Comparison of Christ ; for, what shall it profit us, if we should gain all the Riches, and all the Pleasures of this World, and at last lose Christ and our immortal Souls ? and how miserable will our Condition be if we should die in a Christless Estate ? Lord, we pray thee unite us to Christ by Faith, that we may be one with Christ, and Christ with us ; and when our Hearts, we beseech thee, from the Love of all Earthly Things, and continually live and converse with thee above, while we walk and act here upon Earth. And, Lord, we humbly beg of thee, that thou wouldst work in us a godly Sorrow for all our Sins past ; let it heartily repent us, that ever we should be so vile as to offend so good and gracious a God as thou art ; grant, Lord, that we may hate Sin with a perfect Hatred, let it be most vile in our Eyes ; grant, Lord, that we may put the Knife of Mortification to the Throat of our Beloved Lust ; grant that we may learn to cut off our Right-hand Sins, and pluck out Right-eye Sins. O that thou wouldst be pleased to give us a new Nature, and make Holiness be natural to us, even as Sin has been natural to us ; mollifie we beseech thee, our hard Hearts, and write thy Laws upon them ; change, we beseech thee, our Natures, and renew our Wills, and conform them to thy holy and heavenly Will ; and grant us the Guidance and Assistance of thy holy Spirit, that we may yield hearty and sincere Obedience to thy Will ; let us not any longer allow our selves in the Commission of any known

sin, or in the Omission of any known Duty; and
 grant that we may henceforth so fight against Sin,
 and resist all the Temptations of the Devil, the
 Flesh, and the World, that Sin more and more dy-
 ing and declining in us, Grace and Holiness may
 more and more grow, and increase in us, that going
 on from one Degree of Grace to another, at last we
 may be perfect and compleated in Glory. And,
 Lord, we humbly pray thee, that thou wouldest look
 with an Eye of Pity and Compassion upon this sinful
 Nation, unto which we belong; we must confess
 that we have been a disobedient and gainsaying
 People, thy Mercies would neither win us, nor yet
 thy judgments awaken us, nor none of thy Acts of
 Providence would any ways work upon us, but we
 have gone on obstinately in our Rebellion against
 thee, so that thou mightest long e'er this time have
 justly delivered us up as a Prey to our Enemies; and
 seeing thou hast yet spared us, turn us, we beseech
 thee, from the Evil of our Ways, that thou mayest
 turn away from the Fierceness of thy Wrath, that
 we perish not; fit and prepare us for Mercies, and
 then bestow them on us: Bless, we beseech thee, the
 Queen's Majesty, both at Home and Abroad, give
 her Victory and Success over all her Enemies; bring
 to naught, we beseech thee, all Plots and Conspira-
 cies, which may be form'd against her; make her
 an eminent Instrument of thy Honour and Glory, and
 the Good of thy Church; give her, we pray thee
 a long and prosperous Reign over us here on Earth,
 and at last to crown her with Everlasting Glory

in the Life to come. Consider, we beseech thee; all such as suffer any kind of Affliction, whether of Body or Mind; sanctifie, we beseech thee, Afflictions unto them, that they may work for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. And as thou hast hitherto preserved us from our Infancy unto this present Day and Hour; so, we beseech thee, continue thy Care over us, watch over us by thy Divine Providence, and command thy Holy Angels to pitch their Tents round about us for our Defence and Safety; bless us, we beseech thee, both in our going out and coming in, both in our lying down and rising up, that whether we sleep or wake, live or die, we may be always thine; and, Lord, we pray thee make us so wise, as that we may know and consider in this our Day of Visitation, those things which concern our everlasting Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes. O let it be enough, and too much that we have spent so much of our Time in gratifying the Flesh, in living to our selves, and in serving of Sin and Satan; and grant, that we may spend the Remainder of our Days in thy Service, in working out our Salvation, and labouring by all Diligence to make sure of everlasting Life; and grant, that we may live every Day, as if it were our last Day, and so order our Thoughts, Words and Actions so that we may give up our Accounts at last with Joy, and inherit everlasting Life: These Blessings, and whatever else thou knowest requisite and necessary for us, we humbly beg and crave at thy Hands, upon the Account, and through the Merits of Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; in whose Name and Words, we further call upon thee, as he himself hath taught us, saying,

Our Father, &c.

THE

T H E
Plain Way
 T O
H E A V E N.

Matth. xix. 16.

Good Master, What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?

THE Reason why I give these Directions, is, Because so many Thousands flock to Hell, when they verily think they are in the Way to Heaven: And others go on securely in their Sins, running on in all kind of Wickedness, not considering what will become of them, until they drop into Hell.

First, I will give you a short Hint of the dreadful Estate of the Wicked; and then of the joyful Estate of the Godly; with some Directions in order to your Salvation.

Consider, *First*, all you that continue in your Sins, and will not be persuaded to repent and lead a new Life, how dreadful your Estate will be at last; for as long as you remain in your unconverted Estate, GOD and you are Enemies; you are under his Wrath and Curse; you are Slaves to the Devil: And besides all this, you are

are in Danger every Hour of dropping into Hell ; you know not how suddenly Death may seize upon you : And if then you are unprepared, you shall be halled by the Devils down to Hell, where you shall be kept in Chains and Darkness, unto the dreadful Judgment of the Great Day ; and then your Bodies shall be raised to Life again, and be summoned before the Judgment-Seat of Christ ; where you shall give a strict Account for all things that you have thought, done, or spoken in your Life-time ; there you shall stand trembling before your offended Judge, expecting that doleful Sentence to be pronounced upon you, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ; which was prepared for the devil and his angels.*

No sooner is this dreadful Sentence past, but away you must be gone, away you shall be halled by the Devils, with the rest of your damned Crew, down into that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone ; where you shall be continually tormented with the Gnawings of your Guilty Conscience ; where you shall be continually scorched with the burning Wrath of Almighty God : there your Blood shall boil, your Flesh shall fry ; there you shall lie howling and screeching continually in that Lake of Fire, and never have Ease nor End.

But, on the other side, consider how happy your Conditions will be, if you in time repent, and forsake your Sins, and become new Creatures ; that then God will be your Father, Christ will be your Brother, and the Spirit will be your Comforter : You shall be filled with Peace of Conscience, which is better than the carnal Peace of the Wicked : You shall be filled with the Joys of the Holy

Holy Ghost ; which a thousand Times surpasseth all worldly Joys ; you shall have the free and full Pardon of all your Sins, so that they shall be remembered no more.

And besides all this, whensoever Death comes, whether sooner or later, you shall be sure of Heaven ; and at your last Gaspe, the Angels shall carry your Soul, as they did the Soul of *Lazarus*, into the Kingdom of Heaven. And as for your Body, that shall be laid in the Grave, as in the Bed of Christ, there to rest until the glorious Morning of the Resurrection ; and then your Bodies shall be raised again, and fashioned like unto the glorious Body of Christ ; and Soul and Body being thus reunited, you shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted, and be placed at the Right-hand of Christ, and hear that comfortable Sentence pronounced unto you, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Then you shall be received with Rejoycing and Triumphing into the Heaven of Heavens, the Place of Joy and Bliss. There you shall be stripped of all your Robes of Mortality, and be clothed with Immortality ; then you shall sit down to rest with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven. There you shall possess such Divine Treasures, such rare Joys ; yea, variety of Joys, and such sweet Delights as no mortal Eye hath ever seen, no mortal Ear hath ever heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive, what Joys and Delights God hath prepared for you in Heaven ; then you shall be forever free from all kind of Sin and Sorrow : There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying ; neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things

things are passed away : And God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes, *Rev. 21. 4.* There shall be Life without Death, Health without Sickness, and Pleasure without Pain ; as you shall be free from all Evil, so you shall enjoy all the Good that can be enjoyed. You shall there meet all your dear Friends and Relations, that departed in the Fear of God ; there you shall rejoice one with another, and with one Heart and Voice, sing Praises and Hallelujahs to God, to the Lamb, that sits upon the throne for ever and ever.

And now, I hope, you are ready to ask, *What shall we do, that we may escape everlasting Hell, and get safe to Heaven ?* and begin to open the Heart, and are ready to follow the plain Way to be saved ?

Ans. If it be so, that you earnestly desire to know the way to Heaven, and are willing to walk in that way, then, as I, in my little Book for Young Ones, gave *Nine Directions*, what they should do to escape Hell and attain Heaven ; so here I will give you some Directions, *what you shall do to be saved* ; and, instead of many, I will only give you these Two ; that is, *Repent, and believe the Gospel* ; follow but these two Directions, and you are in the right Way to Heaven : The Law indeed, requires *Perfect Obedience* ; but no meer Man, since the Fall, is able perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, and so, by the Works of the Law, can never be saved.

God has, by Christ our Redeemer, required *Faith and Repentance*, as the Conditions of the Gospel, by which eternal Life is to be had. *Faith and Repentance* is all that God requires, in order to our Salvation : *Repent, and believe the Gospel,*
and

and you shall certainly be saved : I will give you as plain Directions as possible I can, how you shall attain these two Graces.

First for Repentance: You must know that there are Two kinds of Repentance ; there is a false Repentance, and a true Repentance.

A false Repentance, is that which a Man is driven to, thro' fear of Hell and Damnation : When a wicked Man lies upon his Death-Bed then he seems to be sorry for his Sins past, and makes many fair Promises of a new Life ; if it should please God to restore him to his former Health, he follows the same Course again. Now this kind of Repentance can never be effectual to Salvation.

Now you must mind what true Repen-

ance is a saving Grace, whereby a Sinner, out of a true Sense of his Sin and apprehension of the Mercy of God in Christ, doth with Grief and Hatred of his Sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new Obedience.

But now, seeing without this Repentance, there is no getting to Heaven, and that we cannot repent of our selves, it is of God's free Gift, I will therefore give you some plain Directions how Repentance may be had, and how to go through with it ; for tho' we cannot repent of our selves, yet if we do not repent the Fault lies upon us.

1. The first Step to true Repentance, is the Examination of your selves ; try your Hearts, and search into your former Lives, how and after what manner, you have spent your time since you have been a Child ; and to this End, I Counsel you to make a Catalogue of all your Sins you can possibly

possibly call to Mind; for which purpose you must take the Ten Commandments for your Pattern.

Had I Time and Room, I would for your Memory, write y^e gainst being so

Book as *the* wherein is the *Exposition on the ten Commandments*; which shews what are those Sins of Omision and Commission, which is against every Command, and try your self by these, and labour to find out as many of those Sins, as you know your self to be guilty of; for you will find many Sins there, that you in your Place cannot commit; you may only take but one Commandment, or two, at a time, according as your Memory will hold; and if your Memory cannot contain all the Sins that you find your self guilty of, you may write them down, according as you find them out; which Way I think to be the best: And then every Evening, you may make use of this Catalogue, for the finding out the Sins that you committed in the Day; likewise, every Sabbath, the Sins you committed in the Week: likewise, before you receive the Sacrament, that thereby you may repent and be humbled for them.

2. The second Step to true Repentance, is the Confession of those Sins you have thus found out; you must spread them all before the Lord, and confess them all in particular, with all Circumstances, as, the Time when, Place where, and Manner how, such and such Things were committed. Now many confess in general, that they are Sinners; but few confess their Sins: And if your Sins are so innumerable, that you cannot find out every

every particular Sin, so as to confess them all in particular; then confess the rest in general: And there is no doubt, but God will take this for a true and
is no known Sin

is godly
confessed: And it is
godly Sorrow that works Repentance unto Salvation never to be repented of. Now for the obtaining of this godly Sorrow, you must use these Means:

1. Lay to Heart, how good, and how merciful God hath been to you; how many Tokens of his Love and Kindness, he hath bestowed upon you; and yet how ill you have requited him. Seriously consider, how he hath delivered you from such and such a Sickness, when you were near Death: How he hath preserved you from such and such a Danger: How he hath delivered you from such and such Enemies: That notwithstanding your many Provocations, yet he hath born with you all this while: He hath Patience with you, and waits for your Repentance, who might in Justice have snatch'd you away whilst you were sinning, and sent you quick to everlasting Burnings: Yet still he spares you; yet he gives you every Day fresh Supplies of his Mercy: And, as before you were to make a Catalogue of your Sins, so here make a Catalogue of God's Mercies, those several kinds of Mercies and Favours you have received from him, and then lay to Heart what a base and unthankful Wretch you have been, thus to provoke and grieve so good and merciful a God. Think thus with your self, *O that I should be such a base, vile Wretch, for to*

provoke and grieve so loving a Father, that has been so good and gracious unto me ! So merciful a Saviour that died for me !

Such Considerations deeply laid to Heart, will prick your Heart into Godly Sorrow for your Sins ; as Peter, when he consider'd how he denied Christ, He went out, and wept bitterly, Mat. 26. 75.

2. Keep in mind the most of those Sins whereby you have most dishonoured God, and grieved his Spirit : This also will be a Means to work in you Godly Sorrow.

3. Ply the Throne of Grace, by earnest and constant Prayer, that God might take away that stony heart of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh, as he hath promised, Ezek. 36. 26. But it may be, God will seem not to hear your Prayers presently, if therefore you cannot find your Heart to relent the first time, go and pray again, and again, and give God no Rest until he hear you ; and then of a certain one time or other, God will melt your Heart into Godly Sorrow and Remorse for your former Sins ; and then this excellent Grace of Repentance is begun and wrought in you.

4. The next thing to be done, is this, Beg heartily to God for the Pardon of your former Sins, that they may be cast all behind his Back, that they may be washed away in the Blood of Christ.

And then, Lastly, make a firm, strong and settled Resolution, henceforth to lead a New Life ; this must not be a weak Resolution, but it must be a settled and deliberate Resolution. Now, when a Man seriously considers, that except he becomes a New Creature he cannot be saved ; and thereupon takes up a strong and fixed Resolution, henceforth

forth to lead a new Life, the Work is more than half done; that Man is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus for the Act of Repentance: Now I will give you some Helps for the daily Renewing of your Repentance.

1. Every Morning as soon as you rise, prostrate your selves before the Throne of Grace, and earnestly beg for God's assisting Grace, to keep you from falling into any kind of Sin that Day: For after a Man is regenerated, he is yet daily liable to fall foul into Sin, without the Assistance of God's special Grace. Therefore earnestly desire of God in Prayer, that he might strengthen you against all Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and keep you that Day from falling into any kind of Sin.

2. When you have thus done, then go about the Works of your Calling: But set a strict and continual Watch over your Heart, and all your Senses: Watch your Eyes that they do not wander after Vanity; watch your Tongue, that no Lies, nor vain Jestings, nor unprofitable, filthy, and corrupt Speeches, don't come from that: But, above all, watch your Heart, that no evil Thoughts do enter in there; for the Heart is the Spring and Fountain of all Sin and Wickedness: And be jealous over your selves in every thing you do, lest at any time you should sin in it, and keep your selves from all the Occasions of Sin; meddle with none of the Devil's Baits, lest you tempt God to leave you to be overcome. And as often as the Devil doth tempt you to any kind of Sin, or doth offer you any Bait, then immediately lift up your Heart to God by Ejaculatory Prayers; as thus, *Lord, vanquish Satan at this time, that*

he don't overcome me: Lord preserve me this once from falling into Sin: Lord, have Mercy on my Soul, and keep and strengthen me against this Temptation of the Devil, that I be not overcome. And if wicked Men should, at any time, seek to draw you into Sin with them, then make a firm Resolution with your self, never to consent, and as much as possibly you can, keep your self from the Company of Wicked Men: But when at any time, you, through Infirmary, fall into Sin, then lie not in it, but immediately go by your self, into some Corner, and there present your self, and humbly confess it to God, and earnestly beg that God would cast it behind his Back, and wash it away in his Son's Blood, that it may never rise up against you to shame or condemn you: And give your self no Rest, until God hath given you some Assurance of Pardon; and withal, renew your Resolution, to be more watchful for the Time to come. Thus renew your Repentance, as oft as you fall into Sin; or if you cannot do it presently, as soon as you sin, to be sure to do it before you lie down to sleep at Night; every Night, before you lie down in your Bed, look back into the Day past, what Sins you have fallen into, and repent, and beg Pardon for them, and look also and see what Temptations you have overcome, and what Graces God hath strengthened in you, and rejoyce and praise God for it. Thus, by continual Watching, and Praying, and Striving, you will find Sin to die in you more and more, and Grace more and more to grow and increase in you; and whilst others grow near Hell, you will grow nearer and nearer to Heaven. This is the first Step in the Way to Heaven, *Repentance*.

The

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The second is *Faith* : As first I directed you to *Repent*, so, secondly, *Believe the Gospel*.

Now Faith is a saving Grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for Salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the Gospel. Now, seeing a true saving Faith is not in your Power, but it is the Gift of God, and God always bestows it upon those that use the Means which he hath prescribed in his Word, for the obtaining it; I shall therefore give you some Directions, what you shall do to have this Grace of Faith wrought in you.

1. Be diligent in reading the Scriptures : First, you must every Morning and Evening, read a Chapter in your Bible, or else some part of a godly Sermon ; and when you read, you must not run it over, and then leave it, you had as good do nothing, as do so ; but when you read, you must take especial heed, what you be reading of ; and when you have done, look back a little upon what you have read, and see what Sins are condemned there, that you know your self Guilty of, and be humbled for them ; what Duties are required there, and resolve to practise them ; what Judgments God hath threatned against such and such Sins, and stand in awe of them ; what Promises God hath there made, and what are the Conditions of those Promises, and resolve, thro' the Grace of God enabling you, to perform those Conditions, that those Promises may belong to you : And in so doing, then you read with Profit indeed.

2. Be fervent and diligent in hearing the Word preached : For *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. But then
you

you must not do as most do, who either sleep all the Sermon-time, or else lend their Ears for a while, and then when Sermon is ended, they let the Devil steal it out of their Hearts, and so never mind it afterwards : But you had better never go to Church at all, than to go and hear after that Rate. But when you be at Church, you must hearken with all the Attention you can ; hearken earnestly, as if you were to die presently, and go to Judgment. And for your Help herein, you must mark what is the Doctrine ; what are the Reasons and Uses, and how many they are.

2. Hear with Affection : and for your Help you must hear, as if God himself were a speaking to you, and as if he spoke directly to you ; you must hear, as if it were indeed the Word of God, and not of Man.

3. Whilst you are a hearing, set a Resolution to practice what you hear ; and when you come home, call over the Heads of the Sermon in your Mind, and turn every Use and Direction that has been delivered, into Prayer ; pray for God's Blessing on it, and make it matter of your Meditation all the Week ; and then, lastly, set to the Practice of it.

4. Another Means for the getting of a saving Faith, is earnest Prayer unto God for it, Matth.

7. 7. *Ask, and you shall have ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* But you will say, it may be, God will not accept my Prayers ; for God heareth not Sinners, and the Prayers of the Wicked are an Abomination unto Him. I answer ; It is wilful Sinners that God will not hear ; they that pray for

H

Mercy

Mercy, and other good Things, and yet hate to be reformed ; the Prayers of such, God will not regard : But they that come to God in a returning Way, with a full Purpose to leave their Sins, and pray, and earnestly desire Grace, especially this Grace of Faith, they shall certainly be accepted, and have their Prayers granted : But if you desire indeed to have this Grace of Faith bestowed on you, then you must look to the manner of your Prayers ; you must not pray as most do ; but you must pour out your very Soul in Prayer to God, your Heart and Tongue must go together, earnestly desiring that which you pray for ; you must pray with Zeal and Fervency ; you must strive and wrestle with God in Prayer, and never give him rest, until he hath granted your desire ; These are the Prayers that God takes delight in ; and if God answer not your Prayers the first nor second time, then try again and again, as the Woman of *Canaan* did ; and then you need not doubt, but God will hear you at last.

Now concerning the Act of Faith, take but this Direction : Make a Catalogue of all the Promises ; as you did before of your Sins, and God's Mercies ; and then heartily believe, and assure your selves, that every one of those Promises belong to all those that perform the Conditions of those Promises : And if you perform the Conditions, then those Promises belong to you. As for Instance, I will name this one particular Promise, *Mat. 16. 29. Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* Now to make use of this Promise, when
you

you thus embrace Christ, as he is offer'd, when you make your greatest Care to obey the Commands of Christ, all his Commands out of Love to him, as our Saviour ; when you are heartily willing to forsake all your beloved Pleasures, your darling Lust, your secret Sin, for Christ's sake ; and if at last you should be called to it, can willingly forsake Houses and Lands ; yea, and your own Life too, for him, resting fully and wholly upon him for Salvation ; then you are true Believers : And such a Faith as this will certainly bring you to Heaven. Thus if you walk according to this Rule that I have here set you, if you do thus repent, and believe the Gospel, then at last, when Unbelievers and all impenitent Sinners, shall be turned into Hell, you shall be received into the Joys of our Lord and Master, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant unto us all. Amen.

The End of the Sixth SERMON.

THE
 Future State of MAN:
 OR, A
 TREATISE
 OF THE
 Resurrection.

In a Funeral Sermon.

John XXVIII. xxix.

Marvel not at this, the Hour is coming; wherein all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.

OUR Blessed Saviour in these Words, sets forth unto us the State and Condition of all Men at the last Day; for though Sin hath brought Death into the World, and nothing is more certain than Death, so nothing is more certain than that our Bodies must, one Day, be raised

raised again from the Dust of the Earth ; all other Creatures, which move upon the Earth, whensoever they die, there is an End of them, they shall never come into Being more : But with Man it is otherwise, God has endowed Man with an immortal Soul, that shall never die ; a Beginning, indeed, Man has, but he shall never have End : When Death comes, his Soul shall, for some certain Space of Time, be separated from his Body, and his Body laid a while to rest in the Dust of the Earth : *But the last trumpet will sound, and then all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

The Doctrine which I shall raise from hence, is this : That all Mankind, both good and bad, shall at the Sound of the last Trumpet be raised again from the Dust of the Earth.

Now my Method shall be this :

1. To prove, That there shall be a Resurrection.

2. Of the Persons that shall be raised ; that is, *All that are in the graves.*

3. By what Means the Dead shall be raised ; that is, *By the sound of the last trumpet, they shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.*

4. The different Estate and Condition of all Men at the Resurrection : *They that have done good, shall arise to the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.*

5. And, Lastly, To convince us all, by way of Application, of the drawing on of this Time, and therefore that we must not marvel at it ; *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, &c.*

1. To prove that there shall be a Resurrection; which I shall do, first, from the Scripture, which is the true and infallible Word of God, to instance in some few places, as *Isa. 26. 19.* also *1 Cor. 15.* where we have a large Description of the Resurrection: Also, *Acts 24. 15.* *And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection both of the Just and Unjust.* Likewise, *Dan. 12. 2.* *Many that are asleep in the Dust shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt.* Also, *Hos. 3. 14.* God has there promised Redemption from Death, and to ransom them from the Power of the Grave.

Now, if we would believe the Scripture, we must believe the Resurrection of the Body; for the Word of God is true and faithful, and our Lord Jesus Christ hath said in his Gospel, *That Heaven and Earth shall pass away, before one jot or one tittle of his Word should fall to the Ground,* *Matth. 5.* And, besides all this, those Scripture-Promises, which have been already fulfilled in all Ages of the World, may assure us of the Accomplishment of this one Promise, *That our Bodies shall be raised, at the last Day, from the Dust of the Earth.* And this is my Father's Will, saith Christ, *that, of all that the Father hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last Day,* *John 6, 39.*

2. That there shall be a Resurrection of the Body, may be proved not only from Scripture, but also from Nature it self; The Resurrection also is proved from Nature, as we may see from *Isa. 26. 19.* *Thy dead Men shall live, together with my dead Body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that*

that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. Thy dew is as the dew of herbs ; which intimates to us thus much, That as the Herbs and Plants seem to lie dead and withered all the Winter, yet in the Spring they revive, and come forth fresh and green ; and as in the Night, the Sun is withdrawn, and the Day seems to be buried in the silent Night, yet in the Morning the Sun riseth as bright as ever, and inliveneth the World with his glorious Beams : So it is here ; Tho' the Bodies of Men and Women seem for a Time to be lost, and turned to Dust and Corruption, yet in the Glorious Morning of the Resurrection, they shall be all raised to Life, and revive to an immortal Estate.

3. That there shall be a Resurrection of the Body, may be proved also by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ ; that as our Lord Jesus Christ suffered, died, and was buried, that by his Death he might redeem us from Sin and Hell ; so he arose again, that by the Virtue of his Resurrection he might redeem us again from Death and the Grave : The Apostle makes the Resurrection of Christ the Foundation of our Resurrection, as you may see, 1 Cor. 15. 12. *Now if Christ be preached that he arose from the dead, how say some of you, that there is no resurrection of the dead ?* Now there were some that did not believe, that there was any Resurrection of the Dead ; and this their Incredulity and Unbelief the Apostle confutes, and proves, that there shall be a Resurrection ; and that from the Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection, intimating, That if Christ be raised from the Dead, as he preached, that he is risen ;

then it must needs follow, that there must be a Resurrection of all Men from the Grave. Now these People that hold strong that Opinion, that there shall be no Resurrection of the Dead; yet these same Men did preach, that Christ was raised; but the Apostle tells them plain, *That if it be so as they say, that there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen, Ver. 13.* And if Christ be not risen, he tells them what a sad Condition we are in; for *all our preaching, praying, and all that we do and suffer for Christ is in vain, Ver. 14. 5.* But in *Ver. 20.* the Apostle reconciles both Arguments together, *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept:* So that here the Apostle assures them, that Christ is risen from the Dead, and by the Virtue and Power of his Resurrection, all Mankind shall one Day be raised from the Grave. And besides, we read in *Mat. 27.* That at the Resurrection of Christ, *Graves opened, and many of the bodies of the Saints which slept, arose out of their graves;* which is an Earnest to us, that by the same Virtue and Power, all the Bodies of Men and Women, that are, and ever have been, and ever shall be to the World's End, shall be raised again at the last Day.

4. That there shall be a Resurrection of the Body, is an Article of our Faith; therefore, we cannot deny the Resurrection, except we remove our Belief, and deny our Christianity itself; this was an Article of the Apostles Faith, *Acts 24. 15.* And have hope towards God, which themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

5. *And lastly*, There must of Necessity be a Resurrection of the Dead, for the full Manifestation of all God's Attributes : for the Attributes of God are daily manifest in his providential Dispensations ; yet there will not be a full Manifestation of all his glorious Attributes 'till the Resurrection : Now many of God's Attributes are clouded under some dark Providence, but at the Resurrection there shall be a full and glorious Manifestation of all God's Attributes.

J. The Glory of his Wisdom : The Wisdom of God is wonderfully declared, if we consider of it in those innumerable sorts of Creatures, which he hath made in such a holy and beautiful Order and Manner, and in his so wisely ordering and governing all Things and Creatures for his own Glory, and the Good of his People. But, O ! how wonderfully will the Wisdom of God be manifested by all the World at the Resurrection, when both the Earth, Fire, and Water, shall all cast forth their Dead, and not one Man, Woman, nor Child, of all the Seed of Adam, shall be left ; and every Part and Member of each Body shall be joyned to the same Body, in which they belong, and every Soul shall enter into his own Body.

But it may be some will object and say, *How can it be that all the Dead can be raised ; for many are drowned in the Sea, and their Cartasses are eaten by Fishes, and living Men have eaten those, and those Men, it is like, afterward have been burnt to Ashes, and their Ashes mingled among the Dust on the Earth, and scattered up and down, none does know where ?*

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To this I answer, That to Man, indeed, this is impossible to be ; but if God be Infinite in his Wisdom and Power, as indeed he is, then he makes the Dust of every Man, Woman and Child ; and by his All-wise Providence knows what Dust belong to such and such a Body, where-ever it is scattered ; He in his Wisdom also knows what Dust belongs to such and such a Member, and part of such and such a Body, where-ever it is scattered ; he likewise knows how to joyn Bone to his Bone, and every Part in his right Place and Order ; O what wonderful displaying of Wisdom here will be !

2. Here will be a wonderful Manifestation of God's Power also ; The Power of God is now wonderfully seen, in his making such a vast great Fabrick as this World is, and in his spreading the Heavens round the Earth, and his hanging the Earth in the midst upon nothing, here is a great Declaration of God's Power : But, Oh ! how the Power of God will be manifest at last to the whole World ; when he shall cause the Earth to shake, and the Mountains to tremble, and the Heavens to pass away with a great Noise, and to be rolled up like a Scroll ; and the Graves shall open, and both Earth, Fire, and Water shall give up their Dead, and all Mankind shall revive again.

Friends, Here will then be a Declaration of infinite Power ! for, know this, He that by his Power made all Things out of Nothing, can as easily by the same Power raise our Bodies again out of Something, even out of their own Substance or Matter.

Again,

Again, There must be a Resurrection of the Dead, for the full Manifestation of his Holiness, Mercy, Justice, and Truth ; for Brevity, I will name them all together : Here in this World the Justice, Goodness, and Holiness of God is clouded under dark Dispensations ; the Wicked we see they flourish, and live at Heart's Ease, and eat of the Fat of the Earth, and are let alone to prosper in their ungodly Doings. But, on the other side, the dear Children of God they many times are chastened, afflicted, persecuted, trodden under Foot by the Wicked, and made the Off-scouring of all Things. Now here the Mercy, Goodness, Justice, Promises, and Threatnings of God, all seem to be clouded ; this was that which made *David* like to stumble, as he himself confesseth, Psalm 73. *That his steps were almost gone, his feet had well near slipt.* Therefore, upon this Account there must be a general Resurrection, where all things may be brought to rights, and all dark Providences unriddled ; and that it may be made manifest to all the World, what a holy, just and righteous God the Lord is in his severe Punishment of rebellious Sinners ; and yet how faithful and gracious he is towards penitent Sinners, in rewarding them according to his gracious Promises ; and then both Saints and Reprobates shall confess, *That the Lord is just and righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works.*

Thus I have sufficiently proved, that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead.

2. The second Thing to be considered from the Text, is the Number of the Dead which shall be raised ; that is All ; for so saith our Lord and Saviour here in the Text ; *The Hour is coming wherein*

wherein all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth : All ; that is, all the Sons and Daughters of Adam, that ever has lived since the World began, and all that ever shall live and die to the end thereof ; all must arise and make their Appearance at the last Day, St. John declares in his Vision, *Rev. 20. 12.* That he saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God. By small and great, we are to understand (not to understand in Respect of Stature, as if some shall appear grown Men, and some Children) we must all appear then in the Stature and Fulness of Christ ; that is, of a middle Stature, or of that Stature Adam was created in, which is of a middle Stature ; the Oldest shall appear no older, and the Youngest no younger, but by small and great we are there to understand,

First, Those that died of all Ages, from the oldest to the Child that is still-born.

Secondly, By small and great, we are to understand all States and Degrees of Men and Women, both High and Low, Rich and Poor, Noble and Ignoble ; all Sorts and Estates of Men must then make their Appearance, from the King on the Throne, to the Beggar on the Dunghill : And *Rev. 13.* St. John did see in his Vision, That the sea gave up her dead ; and death and hell, that is, the Earth and the Grave, cast up their dead, and all judged according to their works. All the Elements at the Call of Christ, must give up their Dead ; all that the Fire had consumed and burnt to Ashes ; all that ever hath been lost in the Sea ; and, all that ever hath been buried in the Earth, as soon as the last Trumpet sounds, they

they must all come forth, none shall be so great as to escape, nor none shall be so small as to be forgotten. O what a great, what a vast Assembly will there be, when all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* shall meet together : To see an Army of Men together, we think it a great Sight : If all the Men and Women in *England* were to meet together at one Place, what a great, what an invincible great Assembly would there seem to be : But, alas ! what is *England* to the whole World, it is counted but a Garden-plot to other Nations : And what is the whole World now living, in respect of all Ages that are past and to come ? All the *Israelites* of old, which was counted as the Sand of the Sea, they were so innumerable ; and besides them, so many Millions of Millions that have been slain in the Wars, and so many Thousands that has been swallowed up in Earthquakes, and so many Thousands and Millions of Millions that has died by the Pestilence, and all other mortal Distempers in all Ages of the World ; and all that have died naturally in Infancy, in Youth, Middle-Age, and Old-Age, and all that are now living, and that shall live to the World's End ; when all these shall meet together at the general Resurrection, O what a wonderful Meeting will here be ! *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 10.

Friends, both you that read this Treatise, and I that write, we must all make our Appearance there, for all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and come forth.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Third Thing to be considered is this, by what Means all the Dead shall be raised; that is, by the Sound of the last Trumpet; for so saith our Saviour in the Text, *All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth*; and what Voice this is, that the dead shall hear, you may see in 1 Cor. 15. 52. that is, the Sound of the last Trumpet, *For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised*; and who that is, which shall sound this Trumpet; you may see in 1 Thes. 4. 15, 16. *For this I say unto you, by the word of the mouth of the Lord, that we which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleep, for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a Shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the Trump of God.*

So that you see that this Trumpet shall be sounded by an Archangel: So Matth. 24. 31. *They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great Glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Thus we see by what means the Dead shall be raised; that is, by the Voice of the Arch-Angel, by the Sound of the last Trumpet, which Voice shall be uttered more loud and shrill than Thunder, uttering these Words, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.* Now in a few Verses before the Text, Ver. 25. we have another Voice that is sounding in our Ears, *The hour is coming, and now is, that the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* Now these Two Verses, that of the Text, and Ver. 25. tho

tho' they seem to be alike in sound, yet they differ much ; and that in these Two Respects :

1. First in respect of Time : That Voice spoken of in *ver. 25.* is uttered in the Present Tense, *The Hour is coming, and now is :* But that Voice spoken of in the Text, is spoken of altogether in the Future Tense, *The Hour is coming :* Mark, there is no *now is*, but *it is*, a Time that is coming.

2. There is a great Difference betwixt these Two Voices, and that in Respect of the Sense and Meaning of the Words ; for them in the first Voice, contains gracious and inviting Words, which are interpreted by Divines after this Manner : *Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment :* That is, those that are dead in their Sins, and rotting and stinking in the Grave of their Lust : Now these are under the Call of the Gospel, and they that hearken to this Call, and obey this Voice, and so come to Jesus Christ, by a true and lively Faith, and unfeigned Repentance, they shall, by Christ, obtain everlasting Life. But whether they will hear this Voice, or whether they will stop their Ears against it ; yet let them know there is another Voice which shall be uttered to the World, which is a Voice of Power ; and that Voice they must hear whether they will or no, *Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment.*

Consider, Friends, tho' you now stop your Ears, and will not hear the Sound of the Trumpet of the Gospel ; yet know this, there is another Trumpet, which will one Day sound, calling all the Dead out of their Graves, saying, *Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment ;* and whenever that last Trumpet sounds, you must hear it whether you

you will or no ; the Depth of the Grave shall not hinder the Sound, nor yet the Depth of the Sea shall not hinder it.

He that could at firstst command all Things out of Nothing, by the Word of his Power, so at the last Day he will but speak the Word, and the Dead shall all arise, and make their Appearance before the Tribunal Seat of Christ.

The Sound of this last Trumper shall be so loud, that it shall be heard all over the World, it shall pierce even to the Bottom of the Sea, and to the Bowels of the Earth : No sooner is this Trumper sounded, but the Sound shall be obeyed : No sooner is this Voice uttered, *Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment*, but immediately the Graves in all the Church-Yards, and in all other Places throughout the whole World, shall be all opened, and the Body of every Man and Woman shall be framed out of his own Dust, and Bone shall be joined to Bone, and every Part and Member shall be joined in its Place and Order ; and every Soul shall return into its own Body ; the Sea shall give up her Dead ; and the Fire and Earth shall give up their Dead ; and then immediately they shall be all gathered together, even to the Valley of *Jehosaphat*, to be there presented before the Judgment-seat of Christ ; as you may see *Joel 3. 12.* For says Christ here, *The hour is coming, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.*

Fourthly, The Fourth Thing considerable in the Text, is the different Estate and Condition of all Mankind, at the Resurrection ; that is, *Some shall arise to the Resurrection of Life, and some to the Resurrection of Damnation.* Now the different Estate

of

of Good and Bad, at the Resurrection, may be considered in these three Respects:

1. They differ in respect of Time : For tho' all Mankind shall be raised from the Dust of the Earth, yet they shall not be raised all at one and the same Time ; there shall be two Resurrections, first of the Saints, and then of the Wicked. Many there be which affirm, That there shall be a Thousand Years betwixt the Resurrection of the Saints, and of the Wicked ; that the Saints shall all arise at the coming of Christ in the Clouds, with all his glorious Train of Heavenly Host, and shall reign with him a Thousand Years upon the Earth ; and that the rest of the Dead arise not until that Thousand Years are accomplished, *Rev. 20. 4, 5*. Some say, this is meant the complete Number of a Thousand Years : And some say the Meaning of the Spirit of God there, is not the Number of a Thousand Years, but only a considerable space of Time : But I will not affirm any thing of that ; yet this we are certain, that there shall be a Difference between the Resurrection of the Good, and of the Bad, in respect of Time : For Saint Paul is plain in this Case, as we may see, *1 Thess. 4. 16*, he saith, *That the dead in Christ shall rise* : And if the Dead in Christ rise first, then the Resurrection of the Wicked must needs follow after : And *Acts 24. 15*. *There shall be a resurrection both of the just, and of the unjust*. First of the Just, and then of the Unjust ; but how long a Time there shall be between that, I will not positively affirm.

2. There shall also be a Difference between the Resurrection of the Good and of the Bad ; and that

that in respect of their Image and Shape : *The bodies of the saints shall be raised in glory, a splendor like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. 3. 21. saith the Apostle, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto the glorious body of Christ.* Thus Christ himself gives us a Description of the Brightness of the Saints Bodies at the Resurrection, *Matt. 13. 43. Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father.*

The Bodies of our first Parents, in their State of Innocency, was adorned with a glorious Beauty and Comeliness. Now this should have been the State and Condition of the Bodies of all their Posterity, if they had not sinn'd ; but Sin hath stripp'd us of that glorious Beauty and Ornament, and, without artificial Cloathing, our Bodies are very loathsome, nay, monstrous vile to behold ; but in the glorious Morning of the Resurrection, those loathsome and vile Bodies of the Saints shall be *changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ.*

But, on the other side, the Bodies of the Wicked, shall, at the Resurrection, appear more monstrous, vile, and deformed, than they were before in their State of Nature : And besides, the Bodies, of the Saints shall be delivered from that Lumpishness and Heaviness that they be now clogged with, and instead of Natural Bodies, they shall be made Spiritual Bodies, *1. Cor. 15. 44.* and shall fly to and fro as swift as Spirits ; but as for the Wicked, they shall be *bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matth. 22. 23.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, and Lastly, There shall also be a vast Difference betwixt the Resurrection of the Good, and of the Bad, in Respect of their final State and Condition, that they shall be raised unto; *They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation:* The Good being first raised, and then the Wicked; and then, immediately after, the Resurrection both of the Just and of the Unjust: Then they shall be divided one from another, *As a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, Mat. 25. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.* At first shall be pronounced the joyful Sentence upon the Righteous, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom:* But the Wicked shall be sent away with that doleful Sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Sixthly, and Lastly, The last Thing considerable in the Text, and that which I intend shall be the Application of the whole, is the drawing near of the Time, when the Resurrection shall be; and therefore our blessed Saviour bids us not to marvel at it. There were some in our Saviour's Time, and also some in the Apostles Time, and some there are in our Days, that marvel when they hear of the Resurrection of the Body, and of a General Judgment: They will not believe it; but oh! how strange soever they make of it, our Blessed Saviour assures them of it, and tells them that it will certainly be: Therefore this Doctrine may serve to convince us;

First,

First, Of the general Resurrection, and Day of Judgment: For I have in this Discourse proved it by several Arguments, That there shall be a Resurrection, both of the Just and of the Unjust; and as there is nothing more certain than Death, so there is nothing more certain than a general Resurrection after Death.

Secondly, This may convince us, That as there shall be a general Resurrection, so the Time when the Resurrection shall be, is drawing near, so saith our Lord Christ himself here in the Text, *Marvel not at this, the hour is coming, wherein all that are in the grave shall hear his voice and come forth: Tho' our blessed Saviour tells us, Matt. 24. That neither Men nor Angels knows when the Time shall be, yet he assures us, That the Time is coming. Acts 17. 31.* we see there that God hath appointed a Day, wherein he will judge the World: And this appointed Time is a drawing nearer and nearer; do we not see how Days and Nights wheel about apace; yea, so fast is the Time of the general Resurrection coming on, so many times as the Sun has wheel'd round the World since the Creation, so many Rounds is the Thread wound off, and still it keeps winding off, and it will not be long e'er it be all wound off: It is now near 1711 Years since our Lord Christ ascended up into Heaven; the Angels said unto the Men of Nazareth, *That this same Jesus shall so come again, as you have seen him go into heaven, Acts 1.* and the Time ever since has been drawing nearer and nearer; and the Time now certainly cannot be long, but that our Lord Jesus Christ will come in the Clouds, and then the Trumpet will sound, and the Dead shall be raised, and both Quick and Dead must make their general Appearance.

First,

First, Here is a Use of Reproof to such as take Liberty to run on in Sin, putting far from them the Evil Day : And because the Lord seemeth to delay his Coming, therefore their Hearts are set in them to do Evil. There were some in the Apostles Days, and I fear there are many such in these our Days, that walk after their own Lust, and saying, *Where is the promise of his coming ? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation,* 2 Pet. 3. 34. But the Apostle tells them, *Ver. 8, 9. That the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish : But the day of the Lord, whenever it comes, will come as a thief in the night, Verse 10. And when men shall say, Peace and Safety, then suddenly cometh destruction upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. My Friends, pray have a Care; for though you think as the Lord delayeth his Coming, and thereupon you take Liberty to your selves to fulfil the Desire of the Flesh, yet take you heed lest the Lord come in a day when you look not for him, and in an hour when you are not aware of, and cut you asunder, and appoint your portion among the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* Mat. 24. 50, 51.

2. A Use of Exhortation : If it be so, that the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly come, and shortly come, and we must all be presented before him, then how should we live here with all Care and Circumspection, that we may be found of him in Peace, blameless, and without Spot ; *How should we labour to be holy in all manner of conversation, and* godli-

godliness; looking for, and hastning unto the coming of the day of God? 2 Pet. 3. 11. Let this be a strong Motive to move all Christians to Duty and Obedience, and to Perseverance therein; let the Word of St. James be as a Spur to prick you up to be steadfast, and to hold out in the Work of the Lord, Jam. 5. 8. *Be patient therefore, Brethren; establish your Hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* And let me exhort all in the Words of our Saviour, Mark 13. 33. *Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the Time is: and what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.* And in the Words of the Apostle, Heb. 10, 25. *Exhorting one another so much the more, as you see the Day approaching.*

And farther to encourage us in Well-doing, and to be the more diligent, to rebuke, to exhort, to perswade, and encourage one another in Well-doing, let us consider, That we must all one Day, meet together, to be the Acquitters, or else the Condemners of one another; tho' Death comes and takes away a Wife from a Husband, and a Husband from a Wife; tho' it takes away Parents from their Children, and Children from their Parents; tho' Death comes and makes a Breach among Relations, Neighbours, and Families, yet let us consider, that the Day of the Resurrection will come, and then we shall all meet together again, and then we shall not only see and know one another; but we shall also be able to converse one with another: But oh! what a dreadful Meeting we shall then have, if we shall be forced to be the Condemners of one another at that Day; the Apostle tells us, that the Saints shall Judge the World at the last Day; Oh! how dreadful will this

this be when godly Parents shall be Condemners of their own Children, the Fruit of their own Bowels, those whom they once delighted in, and loved most dearly ; now, to pronounce Christ's Sentence against them, because they were stubborn, and wilful, and would not hearken to their godly Counsels and Admonitions ; I say, for godly Parents to exalt and applaud Christ's Sentence against them, when they are condemned to everlasting Fire : Oh ! how dreadful will this be : And thus for Children to condemn their own Parents, because they let them alone in their evil Courses, and would not correct them nor reprove them. And for Husbands and Wives to be the Condemnation of one another. Oh, how sad will this be ! Nay, consider farther, that Relations, Families, Neighbours, and Acquaintance, which spend their precious Time together in Feasting, Drinking, Gaming, and other kind of loose Living, must meet together, and be the Condemners of one another, at the last Day. Oh, what a dreadful Meeting will this be ! But, on the other hand, consider, that all those Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Families, and Relations, which would not join with the Wicked, but spent their Time in Praying together, and for one another, in Exhorting, Instructing, Reproving, and Encouraging one another : Oh, what a joyful Meeting these shall have at the Resurrection ! Now Death many times makes a sad Breach among Families and Relations ; a Wife laments for the loss of her Husband ; he laments for the loss of his Wife ; the Children sometimes do grieve, because they have lost a loving Father, or a dear Mother ; and the Parents they grieve, and are cast down, because they

they have lost a precious Child. But, Friends, Weep not for your Relations, as without Hope, for they are not lost, for the Morning of the Resurrection will come, the Trumpet will sound, and the Dead shall arise, and then you shall meet them all again: And no Tongue can utter or express the Joy you shall have one with another to all Eternity, if you spend your Time together in this World in the Works of Faith and Obedience.

And now, to conclude, Let us all therefore so live, and so spend our short time here on Earth, that so in the glorious Morning of the Resurrection, when the last Trumpet shall sound, we may rise to the Resurrection of Life, and Triumph and Rejoice among glorious Angels to all Eternity: Which the Lord of his Mercy grant, *Amen.*

The End of the Seventh SERMON.

F I N I S.

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